WORLD REVIEW

Incorporating Review of Reviews June 1949

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NEW BOOKS: Reviewed by

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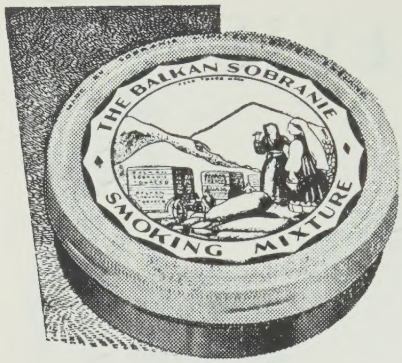

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DECIDE OR DRIFT

BARBARA WARD

For over a year the Western powers have been engaged in the experiment of the Marshall Plan. Organs of economic co-operation have come into being in Paris and Washington. Five billion dollars' worth of raw materials and equipment has been transferred from the United States to the sixteen participating nations. Subsidiary political organisms, such as the Western Union Defence Pact, have taken shape. The Atlantic Pact is signed. In a troubled and divided world, this experiment represents the only field of diplomatic action in which the Western powers unequivocally possess the initiative. Elsewhere, their attitude is rather to find out what the Communists are doing, and endeavour to think up some counter-measure. In Western Europe, it is the Communists who have had to resort to a desperate and sometimes violent search for methods of effective opposition—the waves of French strikes, the Czech *coup d'état*, the blockade of Berlin.

But if people ask themselves the question: 'How will this Grand Alliance in the West look in 1955?', they will be astonished to find that nothing precise can be said, except perhaps a vague reference to 'continuing co-operation within the framework of the United Nations', an ostrich phrase which statesmen often use as a substitute for thought. The great experiment in which the West is engaged drops into the mist in a few years' time. Economically, everything is to be tidy by 1952, all the gears of world trade are to be oiled and functioning smoothly.

Politically, the time limit is more vague. The Atlantic Pact will last—how long? Until the end of Russian aggressiveness? But that is not an easy date to define. Until the peace treaty with Germany is concluded? The conclusion of such a treaty might indeed be the proof that Russia's restlessness has come to an end, but since the restlessness is Messianic and springs from a crusading view of what world order ought to be, can the signing of a single settlement really be the signal of returning peace? So perhaps the Western powers need, and are considering, an indefinite alliance. If so, they are doing little to lay more lasting psychological foundations for it—in spite of the fact that alliances anchored in nothing more than 'common funk'—the Holy Alliance, for instance—have a way of disintegrating without any statesmen being perfectly clear why or how it has happened.

The diplomacy which consists in having no diplomacy can be practised only in times of great stability and invulnerability. If the Marshall experiment is simply an *ad hoc* arrangement, it

will fail, for the late forties of the twentieth century are neither invulnerable nor stable. To keep an initiative they have achieved—with considerable difficulty—in Western Europe, the Western powers will have to stop thinking of 1952 as the *annus mirabilis* in which normalcy at last returns.

Should any proof be needed of the danger of committing the fortune of the Marshall Plan to a policy of drift, it lies in the strong evidences of underlying isolationism which have become apparent even in the first year of its life. They are not confined to any one country or to any particular political group. They crop up in the most unlikely places. It is almost as though, deep in the recesses of every national mind, there were a desire to be left alone, untroubled by bothersome neighbours, and that this desire rose like a mood or a neurosis to colour all kinds of policies which superficially have nothing to do with isolationism at all.

II

Isolationism in the obvious, open, avowed sense has hardly recovered from the discredit of 1940 and 1941. It is the various veiled forms it now assumes that are significant. Take first of all the support given by some groups in the United States to the conception of European federation. The desire that Marshall Aid should be used to 'push, prod, and encourage' the participating nations into a close Western Union was in many cases a generous desire to see other nations adopt a political structure which had proved so perfectly adapted to the needs of the United States. But in other cases, the underlying motive could perhaps be summed up thus: 'A strong Western Europe or even United Europe would be politically, militarily, and economically quite strong enough to deal with all transatlantic problems, particularly with the Russian and German problems. If such a union can be brought into being, America will be rid of the present tiresome rôle of world leadership and can return to cultivating its own particularly inviting back garden.'

A rather more straightforward type of isolationism has appeared in Britain. It takes the form not of hastening a Western Union or a federated Europe but of trying to keep Britain out of such a union at all costs. The feeling is particularly strong among those Conservatives to whom belief in the British Empire is practically the only conscious principle in international affairs. Day to day, readers of the Beaverbrook press can hear its owner's lamentations over the sacrifice of the Empire to doubtful experiments in Europe.

If we turn to France, isolationism appears in a curious guise in the sombre bosom of General de Gaulle. The General regards 'the Anglo-Saxons' on the one hand, and the Russians on the other, as alien to Europe. He wants a united Europe—and a united Western Europe as a starting point—but he wants it under his own leadership. Therefore he must isolate the Continent from its neighbouring giants and reconcile his country to alliance with Germany, upon which the new 'Europe for the Europeans' will be based. It is this underlying isolationism that has led General de Gaulle into such statements as: 'France has lived hundreds of years without the Marshall Plan and could do so now' or 'Europe can only be defended from France. It is inconceivable to base the defence of Europe upon London'—a statement which, in the shortness of its memory and the arrogance of its claim, bodes ill for the cooperativeness of a Gaullist France.

Another form of isolationism is connected not so much with any particular nation as with particular political points of view. As such, it can be found in both Europe and Britain. One school of supporters base their thinking on the need for neutrality. Europe, they argue, cannot survive an atomic war. It must therefore unite itself as a great neutral bloc between America and Russia.

This desire for a Europe cut free from the influence of either great neighbour is also to be found in moderate Left-wing opinion. This group has suffered a species of intellectual and ideological martyrdom in the last three years. Immediately after the war, Russia had the double halo of having the world's first planned economy and of having won a tremendous military victory. The tendency of moderate Socialists was to look to Russia and regard America—an America in which all controls were swept away and the Republicans returned to office—as the citadel of unrepentant capitalism.

Since 1945, this ideological picture has been torn to pieces and with it the hearts of many honest men who have had to watch their Soviet idol sink to lower and lower levels of national and international behaviour and the distrusted Americans rise to a height of disinterested generosity unique in the annals of history. Fact and ideology have struggled in their breasts and the only compromise they find emotionally satisfying is to join the great body of people who, all over the world in every class and country, have been trying to act as 'bridges'—bridges between East and West, between capitalism and socialism, between planning and *laisser-faire*.

The 'bridge' concept demands that a united Europe shall belong neither to the East nor to the West. It shall support neither Russia nor America but attempt to create a third bloc, a third alternative between the rival powers. Its policies shall combine planning and freedom. In domestic politics it shall stand between the extremes of Right and Left. In international affairs it shall seek, by dissociating itself from its present close ties with the United States and by making its independence of Russia clear, to act as an independent buffer state—or group of states—between the two. The most persuasive and vocal spokesmen of the view are probably to be found among the British Members of Parliament who last year were grouped round Mr. Richard Crossman and published a pamphlet entitled 'Keep Left'. But the mood is also apparent among the Continental parties of the Left, especially those which, like the Socialists of France and Italy, feel themselves in danger of being ground away between the upper and nether millstones of domestic extremism.

These various trends are quoted, not because they are important in themselves, but because they show the way in which a policy of drift would be likely to lead the Western powers. It would disintegrate their alliance. It would encourage every centrifugal force, every affirmation of national selfishness and particularism. Europe would float loose from the Atlantic Pact. Britain would seek to pull away into a supposedly isolated Commonwealth. France and Germany would be abandoned to their old contest. Instead of a free world in reasonable control of its own destiny, there would be once again—as there was before the last war and as there threatened to be in 1945 and 1946—a medley of nations, great and small, agreed on nothing, and each cancelling out the others' best intentions and most careful plans.

III

There are three main reasons why the collapse of the present alliance between the Western powers—the United States, Britain and the British Commonwealth, and the participating countries in Western Europe—would spell ruin for the West. The first has become so obvious that it need not be described in any detail. It is that Russia has upset all the old calculations of power in the world, and Western isolationism, which belongs to a nostalgic past, is not equipped to deal with the new pattern of power. Whatever the dreams of supporters of an international 'Third Force' in the shape of an independent Europe, such a force cannot come into existence, for the simple reason that it cannot become a force. The Russian weight lies so heavily on Europe —for the time being it has bulged to the

Elbe—that there is only one way in which Europe standing alone could offer a reasonable counterweight, and that is by throwing all its resources and all its energy behind a militarily restored Germany. Such a solution is unthinkable.

The counterweight must therefore be provided by America's close association with Europe. To say so is not necessarily to convict Russia of further ambitions in Europe: it is merely to state the obvious —that powerful states with Messianic urges will always spill over into a political power-vacuum if such a one exists on their frontiers. War is avoided by seeing that such a vacuum does not exist; it is made certain by a retreat which simply creates others.

So much for Europe; but the problem of new patterns of power is not confined to Europe. All the Western powers have vital interests in the Far East and South-east Asia, and here in the last six months a reversal of old relations has taken place, which is as revolutionary as the absorption of Eastern Europe into the Soviet sphere and which may, in the long vistas of history, have even profounder repercussions. Communist control has swallowed a large part of China, and whatever allowances—wishful allowances —one may make for the development of Chinese 'Titoism', the policy of the Chinese Communists, for the time being, will certainly be closer to Moscow's than to any other power's. This reversal of a whole strategic position has not so far elicited from the Western powers even the essential preliminary of joint consultation. In fact, they are behaving in the Far East in the separate, unco-ordinated fashion they would still be using in Europe, had it not been for Mr. Marshall's initiative. But the results only underline the need for a closer and more inclusive alliance.

The second reason why the alliance of the West is a permanent need is economic. In the first place, Europe standing alone—and with all the more emphasis Western Europe—cannot satisfy its own economic needs. The Nineteen Nations are on the whole exporters of manufactured goods and importers of food and raw materials. Their prosperity turns on their ability to sell these goods and to secure primary products in return at reasonable prices. One great source of raw materials—the New World, and the United States in particular—will remain, on all present estimates, limited, since it will be impossible for Western Europe to sell its manufactured exports there in sufficient quantities to buy all that it might wish in return. It is therefore vital to stimulate alternative sources of supply —to increase the acreage under food in Australasia and Africa, to develop the mineral riches of Central Africa, to expand timber and grain production in Eastern Europe.

But both the scale of trade with the United States and the amount of investment available for developing non-dollar resources depend in the first place upon American policy. The scale of American purchases and investment abroad is the first yardstick of an expanding world market. The Western powers are without exception debtor nations, hard hit by the war. The contribution they can make to the capital development of new areas—a cardinal factor in an expanding economy—must be judged in the light of the likely contribution to be made by the tremendous American economic machine. Like an ocean-going liner, the United States economy can draw along in its vast wake the smaller economies of its war-torn allies. But the momentum must come in the first place from the United States. And since this is the case, it is folly to imagine that the profound inter-relationships between the American and European economies will come to an end in 1952. Rightly conceived, the Marshall Plan by 1952 will simply have restored Europe to a position in which it can throw the weight of its regained prosperity behind America's in the fight to expand the prosperity and productivity of the whole world.

At this point we touch on the third reason why it would be disastrous for the West's Grand Alliance to peter out in the restoration of parochial isolationism. It is quite simply that, in the world of ideas, the challenge presented by Communism stops at no frontiers, recognises no Monroe Doctrines, is as challenging in Harlem as in Chinatown, in Sierra Leone as in Peru. The Communist ideology claims that peace can be secured ultimately only in a Communist world; the peaceful association of non-Communist peoples and nations is thus an essential and permanent counter to the claim. It affirms that the only relationship between non-Communist states of differing power and development is either competition and enmity or exploitation and imperialist absorption; the evolution of a free federation of nations co-operating on a basis of equality thrusts the lie back and, incidentally, throws Russia's inability to swallow up Yugoslavia into relief.

Communism's claims to be the sole force able to overcome 'irrational obstacles' of race and nationality can be disproved only by the development of equal rights and common citizenship among the democracies. Communism's prophecy of the inevitable instability of all save Communist economies and the total inability of any save Communist planning to create an expanding world can be disproved only by long, hard years during which, steadily and without the violent vacillation of boom and slump, the free world builds up the prosperity and expands the horizons of the free world.

In short, the Western powers are faced not only by a rival principle of political and economic organisation, but by a secular religion which offers a new prophetic vision of a peaceful, fraternal and rational world. Unless the faith they pit against it has wider loyalties than their own state, wider interests than national prosperity, and higher hopes than local self-preservation, they will finally lose their battle because they will have failed to mobilise the deepest resources of man's spirit. Communism may be a crooked and finally a destructive ideology, but it is not afraid to demand faith and sacrifice. So far the Western world appears to have fixed 1952 as the closing date for both. There is no more certain way of writing 'finis' to the West.

IV

What, then, should the Western powers do?

The first step is to be clear about their fundamental aims. They face a power whose ambition is to create a world order from which Western values, Western traditions and Western institutions will have been very largely wiped out. The supreme achievement of classical and Christian civilisation—the emergence of man as a free and responsible agent apart from the collective unit of tribe or city —will have given way to the new collectivism in which man once again sinks back to become a unit, an instrument, an industrious ant. The Western powers cannot therefore aim at less than a world order in which the Western experiment of freedom can continue to unfold. Theirs is a triple struggle—first, to hold the present frontiers with Communism; secondly, to destroy in their own society the evil or irrational forces which make a mockery of their claim to freedom; and thirdly, to penetrate and permeate the Communist world by example and propaganda until Moscow itself feels as menaced as do the nations of the West.

In the Middle East, in the Indian Ocean, in the Pacific, the Western powers must be linked, in common systems of regional defence, with joint chiefs of staff, standardised weapons, and small but highly mechanised and mobile police units ready for immediate action. Police work may well be all that these armies are called on to perform, for the Russians, unlike the Germans, have shown in the past a capacity to respect the fact of opposition, provided it is made sufficiently plain. It is the open doors all

round the world that lead them on. Doors firmly closed and bolted will not be burst open.

But defence work is no more than the first foundation. The ideological floods which threaten the world will not be checked simply by building higher dams. The chief test of the effectiveness of the democracies lies in their capacity to canalise the rising waters of social change, to drain the swamps of economic frustration and destitution, to organise fully the energies which science and industrialism have liberated in mankind. Their enormous capacity for expansion and experiment, which was proved to the ultimate degree in the test of war, is challenged no less by the cold war of Communism.

The Second World War was won when the initiative was at last snatched from the Nazis' hands. In the cold war of today, initiative is once more everything. Let the initiative therefore be framed on a scale fit for an age that flies faster than sound and has released the fundamental energy of the world in the atom. In the political field, the United States, the British Commonwealth, and the states of Western Europe—grouping between them the great part of the wealth, skill, and culture of the world—should enter into a solemn compact, an act of union which establishes common citizenship and minimum organs of common government.

The United States has already proposed international control of what will be the chief source of power and productivity in the future—atomic energy. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to ask that the experiment of internationalised atomic energy should begin at once with those nations that are prepared for it. The Russian veto need not become the last bulwark of national atomic control.

The chief economic functions could be confined to two. The first is to create the preconditions of a common currency by vigorous action to balance the various active areas in world trade. If by 1952, for instance, the sterling area had come to a working degree of convertibility with the currencies of Western Europe, a comparatively stable relationship could be established between dollar and sterling. At that point, it would not be beyond the wit of a central monetary authority to guarantee the convertibility of sterling in terms of dollars and, with sensible safeguards, to make the dollar the common currency of the free world.

The chief obstacle to such a policy is the fact that the monetary claims of the non-dollar nations still greatly exceed their capacity to produce wealth. Simply to guarantee convertibility of other currencies into dollars would place so great a strain on American production that the result would be the slipping of its economy into catastrophic inflation. The central authority would have, therefore, to establish conditions of eligibility for membership of the dollar currency union of which the first would be a balanced budget and internal financial stability. But once in the union, each nation would automatically extend the world's free trade area and therefore the world's capacity to produce and exchange wealth.

The other principal function of the central economic authorities would be to ensure stability in the currency union by safeguarding, stimulating, and controlling the flow of fresh capital investment. In setting up a World Bank and an International Monetary Fund, the powers have already admitted that economic stability and expansion must be pursued by international means, but so far they have not made full use of these instruments. A World Bank working as the central authority for investment for the Western powers could be charged with expanding the production of foodstuffs and primary products, developing mineral resources in new areas, initiating land reclamation, drainage, and hydro-electric schemes from Ceylon to Puerto Rico, from Alaska to the Celebes. In this way, it would both secure the more developed

(*continued on page 79*)

Return to Colmar

We are privileged to print this article, the first Dr. Schweitzer has written since he returned to his native Alsace after an absence of twelve years in Africa, and which, in its reminiscent mood, throws a revealing light on one who is considered the greatest of living Europeans

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

The Colmar of 1880–6 played a special rôle in my life, since it was for me the place where I became acquainted with the great world. It was then—from my sixth to my eleventh year—that I spent a few weeks each spring and autumn in Colmar.

The first time I caught a glimpse of the life of the great city was when I watched the so-called 'cavalcade', which featured the men of Colmar on horseback and which took place in 1881 or 1882. In its preparation I participated. Through table-talk I became aware of discussions about the route which the procession was to take, about the costumes and the like. Brilliantly the sun shone on the Sunday fixed for the festival. The procession moved through the streets of the town. Accompanying it were men on horseback who rode along beneath the houses, collecting money from the spectators standing at the windows. The money was thrown into jingling bags which were passed up at the end of long poles. Some of these men were not in perfect control of their horses, so that their bags did not reach as far as the windows, with the result that the coins fell, not into the bags, but on to the ground. This, however, appeared to have been foreseen, for the coins were wrapped in paper so that they could easily be collected by bag carriers on foot. The exciting spectacle of horses bolting with their riders was also to be seen, but this only enlivened the proceedings which lasted into the night.

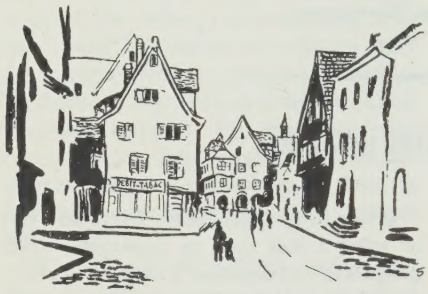
When, a few days later, I returned full of what I had seen to Gunsbach, I felt towards my schoolmates a sense of superiority, which until then I had not known. That sonorous word, cavalcade, meant nothing to them. In vain did I try to make clear to them its significance, but it lay beyond the horizon of their world.

In October 1893, when I went to Paris for the first time, I witnessed the first commemoration of the Franco-Russian alliance. A great parade took place. All the buildings were beflagged. The street lamps, the trams, the omnibuses, the carriages, yes, even the horses, were decorated with little French and Russian flags. The waves of enthusiasm went high. During the torchlight procession the Russians in their white uniforms stood out as bright flecks from the crowds. Everyone was astonished that I was not overwhelmed by this spectacle as one would have expected of a youth from the provinces. But I could not help comparing it with the cavalcade I had seen in Colmar. This one was more magnificent, but it did not come up to the first memory. The cavalcade had been for me an acquaintance with the *grand monde*. The Parisian spectacle was but its renewal.

Even the Louvre could not rival the Colmar museum with which my childhood memories linked me. I knew the Colmar museum fairly well, for in those days it was the custom of Colmar families to conduct

their visitors from the country (they usually came on Thursdays) through the museum after lunch. I can only hope that this tradition has remained in spite of the cinema and football matches, because of its 'cultural significance', as they say today.

The museum visits of my godparents and their guests began before the works of the old masters. Dutifully we paid them their



Colmar—Grand'Rue

honour. But whenever a painter's name of the olden days was known, it would not be that of the master, Matthias Grünewald, but that of Schongauer. Grünewald's paintings were hung in a poorly lighted corner. Far be it from me to claim that I was the boy who discovered Grünewald, but I cannot help confessing that his paintings exerted an attraction over me. Whenever the caravan of museum visitors to which I belonged moved on to other galleries, I would remain standing in front of Grünewald until I was fetched away. What attracted me to him was first of all the brilliance of his colours and their strangeness, and then his realism. And what realism there was in the glimpses of the devils and animal monsters that surrounded the holy Anthony! I could not see enough of it.

What interested me most was the hair of the apostle John, who took care of Mary under the cross. His straw-like, disorderly hair held a special meaning for me. I myself had the misfortune to possess a shock of hair which resisted the comb. In the apostle John I saw a fellow-sufferer. I pitied him as I pitied myself, for as a child he had, no doubt, had to suffer every morning when the maid-servant combed his hair, as I suffered at the hands of our maid. In order to tame my hair, I plastered it down with pomade. But what vain efforts! An hour later, even when I did not move my head about, my hair rose again and disposed itself just as it pleased. Of the delineated parting, nothing more was to be seen. And then all those unfriendly remarks that accompanied the combing: 'The hair is a reflection of the character', or, 'It is so stubborn because the boy himself is so stubborn.' What have I not heard on account of my hair!

He, too, I told myself, gazing at the apostle John, had to suffer physical and moral torment in his youth because of his hair. This reflection afforded me some consolation. Although I was convinced that at heart I was a good and obedient boy, I had begun to be confused about myself. I asked myself whether what they said about the relation between my hair and my character had some truth in it after all, and whether I should regard myself as a creature fated to be bad. I began to have a kind of inferiority complex, as it is called today. From this I was delivered by Grünewald's apostle John. When I looked up at him and noticed that, in spite of his unruly hair, he had become an apostle, I told myself that the hair could not have the meaning with which I had been frightened; gradually I was released from the fear which had eaten into me and darkened the sky under which I lived.

BUT it was also in Colmar that I became acquainted with the feeling of guilt and, in fact, with the involuntary complicity in guilt which is one of the most complicated of moral problems.

One Sunday afternoon my godmother had to go somewhere or other and left me in the care of the two maids. In those days even the smaller households had two maids. As she left, my godmother said to them: 'Go for a walk with him in the neighbourhood and take good care of him.'

Hardly had she disappeared with her daughter than I found myself with the two girls running on the way to Horbourg. As

we came near, we heard the music of a brass band. It was the Horbourg fair which had attracted my companions. Scarcely had we arrived there than we were on the dance floor. It was the old-fashioned *contre-danse* in which two rows of men and women bow to each other, approach and then part. My two companions took good care of me: each held one of my hands and each had on her other side a dancer far more interesting to her than I was. The whole afternoon I was made to go forwards and backwards, to bow and to turn around myself. I was thus initiated into the secret of the *contre-danse* at the Horbourg fair.

On the way home, I then became an involuntary participant in guilt. 'You need not say that we went to the fair,' whispered one of my companions. This filled me with pride but also with unrest. I was proud that these women should have such trust in me, a small boy. Feelings of chivalry soared from my heart to my head. But at the same time I realised I had got into a position where I might have to lie to remain loyal to my companions. Fortunately, as does happen to us now and again, a gracious fate spared me from the temptation to which I had been subjected. I did not have to lie, nor did my companions. When my godmother returned home, she asked the two girls: 'Did you have a nice walk?' They answered: 'Very nice, madam'. The question as to the place and the manner of the walk was never asked.

The other story of involuntary participation in guilt did not turn out so well.

One afternoon my godmother entrusted me for some unknown reason to the care of a Colmar boy, the son of a friend of hers and of my mother. He was a little older than I was, but in all things far ahead of me. 'Take good care of him; do not go to the river and in no case go on a boat,' said his mother to him. 'Take good care of him, do not go to the river and in no case go on a boat,' repeated my godmother. Burdened with these two warnings, he took me away, led me through little streets which I did not know, out of the town, and there we stood by the river. For the first time in my life I saw boats, not in a picture-book, but real boats floating on the water, with people in them. This moved me a great deal for, having passed the period in which I wanted to be a coach-driver and then a confectioner, I had reached the stage where I wished to be a sailor.

'Now we must find a boat that is not too well tied up', said my companion. He found one, untied it, clambered in and with a movement of the head ordered me to do the same. 'But remember that your mother and my godmother forbade us to do this', I implored. He did not honour me with an answer, but looked at me as if I had fallen from the moon and spoke an incomprehensible language. That he took no pains to give an excuse for our disobedience, but simply treated the order as non-existent, staggered me. His behaviour allowed me to discover a feeling of being above good and evil, which until then I had not suspected.

Colmar: view taken from the Quai de la Poissonerie

When later, around 1893, I became acquainted as a student with the writings that Friedrich Nietzsche had published in the '80s, and which began to attract attention in the early '90s, the 'beyond Good and Evil' of this philosopher did not surprise me

greatly. What he explained in words I had learned from the eloquent silence of my companion that day on the river, and I had made the concept my own when I obeyed his commanding look and followed him into the boat.

In spite of the remorse resulting from the disobedience into which I had let myself be forced, I enjoyed what I could get out of it. I experienced at last the fulfilment of the dream which for so long I had carried within myself. What had hitherto been unimaginable—to sail on the water—now became reality.

From this dreaming I was delivered by shouts in the distance, which became louder. My fellow-passenger also heard it. His expression darkened. 'Now we had better turn back', he said.

I realised that things were beginning to go amiss. Some of the boats which we had met on the way must have told the owner of the one which my companion had requisitioned, that it was making a journey with two boys in it. When we got back, the owner had prepared an unpleasant reception for us and he said to my friend: 'This time I shall tell your mother.' Indeed, the matter was brought before our parents.

When my godmother brought me back to Gunsbach and at the station my mother asked the usual question whether I had behaved well, she answered (I can still hear her): 'Not very'. On being pressed, she related what had happened, but added that I had been led astray by the older boy. Even these extenuating circumstances, however, did not help me. I received my punishment. But it should also be said to my honour that I felt remorse as if I had done the wrong myself.

Here in Colmar, where I made my first voyage, the destination of a future voyage was also revealed to me. From the beginning, the monument to Admiral Bruat, with its sitting and reclining figures symbolising the peoples of the distant parts of the world, had held my attention. Among these I was particularly captivated by that of the Negro, because it showed most clearly the race to which it belonged, and because it was so full of expression. In the face and the bearing of the Herculean figure of the Negro dwelt a melancholy which went to my heart, and which moved me to brood over the lot of the black peoples. Each time I had to go to or from the station, I asked to be allowed to make a detour to include the monument so that I could greet the Negro and hold converse with him. When I was at school in Mulhouse, it remained my custom on visiting Colmar to call on my black friend in red sandstone. From 1896 onwards, after my sister had married in Colmar, I often had occasion to remain in the town and renew acquaintance with it; to see old friends again and to win new ones; to enjoy once more the wonderful pealing of the bells of St. Martin from near at hand . . . and to be with the Negro again.

This statue of Bartholdi transmitted to me the call of Africa which subsequently I followed.

When for the first time I travelled along the African coast in 1913, I discovered the Herculean Negro race to which Bartholdi's model belonged. It lives on the Ivory Coast.

How much I was attached to the town of Colmar, I came to learn in the first few weeks of 1945 when I heard from the radio station of Lambarène of the danger in which Colmar found itself. I thought I would have to get used to the idea of finding the town in nothing but ruins. But one evening a white man, who was in the hospital and who had a wireless set with him, sent me a note with his boy that Colmar had been liberated and had been left practically undamaged. A few days later I received in an airmail letter via Paris a newspaper cutting with a picture in which the Mayor, *en béret et avec son cache-nez*, was welcoming the troops which had liberated Colmar. But it is only now, because of what I have seen with my own eyes on my return to the town, that I dare believe what they said in the note which the white man sent to me in Africa.

'GOD'S EAGER FOOL'

A note on a meeting with Albert Schweitzer

STEFAN SCHIMANSKI

'He went away silently'—that was thirty-six years ago. And to many it seemed like an escape from the burden of an intolerable civilisation. It was certainly an extraordinary step to take for a young man whose career, until then, had been as remarkable as it had been brief. He had become a Doctor of Philosophy at the age of twenty-four; of Theology at twenty-six; of Music at thirty-one. With his theological researches into the Historical Jesus, he had shaken the ecclesiastical world; his massive work on J. S. Bach had come to be accepted as the definitive study of the great musician; he was famous as an organist as well as for his standard book on the construction of organs; and he was already at work on the first volume of his *Philosophy of Civilisation*. Then, at the age of thirty, keeping a vow he had made nine years previously, he closed his books and his music, and took up the study of medicine. When the doctor was ready, he set out on that extraordinary mission, the aim of which was nothing less than 'to try and live in the spirit of Jesus Christ.' His destination was Africa, the continent without a past; his quest was the primitive negro whose suffering countenance he had first met in Bartholdi's statue of Admiral Bruat in Colmar; his choice was the Lambarene district of French Equatorial Africa where there was not a single doctor. And he went away silently—not as a hero of action, but as a hero of renunciation—to atone 'in an infinitesimal degree, for all the wrongs inflicted by white men on the black.' 'Did you ever question your decision?' I asked him when I met him. 'Never,' he replied, 'I have no regrets whatsoever.'

I had gone to see him in the little village of Gunsbach where he was brought up, and to which he had returned a few months ago. It was twelve years since he had been home. His hair has become grey, his eyes more weary, and his features looked more rugged than his pictures suggest. At first sight, on seeing the massive figure with its steady gait, one might have taken him for a well-to-do elderly farmer. But when one talked to him, he seemed like an understanding country doctor, or perhaps a friendly parish vicar. Everything around him was simple. His dress, his manner and his speech could have been that of a peasant. And yet it was this very simplicity that held a meaning of its own. 'The spirit of the age dislikes what is simple. It no longer believes the simple can be profound. It loves the complicated, and regards it as profound. The spirit of the age loves dissonance. That shows how far from thinking it is—for thinking is harmony within us.' The words are his; and this, 'the abdication of thought', as he had warned a quarter of a century ago in his *Philosophy of Civilisation*, was the decisive factor in the collapse of our world. 'That book,' he now told me, 'was, I regret to say, absolutely prophetic. How many people are there today who think out ideals which aim at the progress of life and fit them into the realities of our existence?'

It was never the 'big' things that mattered

to Schweitzer. The town of Colmar, some fifteen miles from Gunsbach, meant more in his life than Paris; his hospital, above Lambarene, more than the capital of French Equatorial Africa which, as he told me, he had never visited. 'It is not at all necessary to build *big* organs,' he said to me after he had been playing the organ in the village church, 'but it is a question of how you build them.' And when he was playing, bending lovingly over the keys of the instrument, he revealed the nature of his unique personality with its tremendous energy, constancy of purpose and concentration on the most insignificant detail. His devotion to the single note was like his devotion to the single soul in the depths of Africa. 'Listen,' he would say above the full texture of the music, 'listen to the flutes in my left hand.' And the notes were no longer sound, but living voices, simply because he had the power of will to give them reality, just as the touch of his hand had given hope to countless suffering negroes. A little later he bent over slightly and, without stopping to play, exclaimed, 'Isn't it wonderful what you can get out of such a little organ?' and his face, which until then had been serious but not tense, assumed a compassionate expression as if he were comforting a man in pain. The entire meaning and teaching of his life seemed symbolised in his playing of the organ. It represented that invisible power of unity, born out of the poetic fusion of all the works he had undertaken, which, once upon a time, had been destined to abide in every human being. Today only his example, with its twin graces—of compassion and gratitude—stands out against and above the spiritual fatigue of the European scene. And his own life has assumed a meaning which even he probably did not anticipate when he first went to Africa. Africa is still the symbol of his life, and will for ever remain, just as Arabia will always be the symbol of T. E. Lawrence. But it is Europe that has come to be his judge, for his 'living sermon in the brotherhood of men' alone gives a true perspective of the suffering of an over-civilised civilisation. His mission started as a silent pilgrimage in the service of sacrifice; it has become a silent revolution for a return to sanity. But the revolution is far from being understood or followed. Only one factor, he had written, could arrest the inevitable decay: 'Only a universal ethic of the feeling of responsibility in an ever-widening sphere for all that lives.' That remedy has still to be applied. There had been reports that Schweitzer had come home to retire. But he laughed at them. There was no question of that, he explained. There was the leprosy to fight among the natives, and he spoke of a new drug which he was going to use when he returned in the autumn. But it was not only a question of leprosy or a love for the natives who, in fact, irritated him not a little at times, as he confessed. It had become even more than a simple matter of duty: it had become a matter of destiny. 'Do you find rest in Europe?' I asked Dr. Schweitzer. He shook his shaggy head of hair. 'I only find rest in Africa where I have my work to do.' That work is far from finished, and it will not be finished until the significance of its challenge has been understood and accepted. That may never be, but this is not a matter for Schweitzer. His duty is to his challenge, not to its effects. 'People today have lost their relation to the past,' he told me; 'they live in a vacuum.' His purpose is to teach the necessity of a link with the past by devoting his life to those who had no past at all.

And so the man who has been called the 'greatest soul in Christendom', the 'greatest man in the world' and 'the most civilised man of the twentieth century', and who is annoyed by every one of these epithets, will go back again, silently, as he came. But there may be one name to which, perhaps, he would not entirely object. Nearly two thousand years ago St. Paul spoke of those 'fools for Christ's sake' who went out into the wilderness to devote their lives to the service of their fellowmen. Schweitzer is of their company; he is 'God's Eager Fool'—but with a difference: if he is a saint, he is a saint without a church, and if he is a prophet, he is a prophet without a dogma.

Albert Schweitzer 1949

Comments on JOHN GIELGUD'S *production of*

THE LADY'S NOT FOR BURNING

by Christopher Fry

at the GLOBE THEATRE

CHRISTOPHER FRY and LOUIS MacNEICE

THIS is a revival of a play first produced at the Arts Theatre Club in London last year. Its virtues and its faults have not been magnified or reduced, and the difference between this and the original production is mainly one of scale and speed. The Globe production is bigger and a little slower; it is also funnier, but it has not the swing of Jack Hawkins's direction and the impact of Alec Clunes's swash-buckling performance as the discharged soldier who claims alternately to be the devil and a murderer.

But both Mr. Fry and Mr. MacNeice will describe the play more fully, and perhaps I can best occupy myself by introducing the author. Christopher Fry is one of the Quaker Frys from Bristol, and has been writing verse plays since he was a boy. His principal works are 'Thor With Angels' and 'The Firstborn', which were produced at the Canterbury and Edinburgh festivals; and another verse comedy, 'A Phoenix Too Frequent', which has been seen in London at the Arts Theatre Club. Although he spent three years of his working life as a schoolmaster (after being an actor for a short time), he gave it up as soon as possible and went to the repertory theatre at Tunbridge Wells where he continued to act and began to produce plays. Later he became a producer of the repertory company in Oxford.

So far his outstanding talent in the theatre is for the provision of sparkling dialogue which, while in verse according to the printed text, can be spoken as trippingly on the tongue as the most colloquial modern speech. He is also developing a facility for the wisecrack in verse which has escaped most of our verse-dramatists—though it may be questionable whether some of his jokes are worth the actor's effort in pointing them. There seems no limit to the promise of Christopher Fry when he uses his gift of words with a little more discipline—so that it may be the foundation rather than the embellishment of his work in the theatre. As to what Christopher Fry is aiming to do on the stage, it is best that he should explain himself. . . .

GERARD FAY

THE AUTHOR EXPLAINS

THERE may be certain aspects of *The Lady's Not For Burning* which are not immediately apparent; not immediately apparent because they are unexpected; unexpected only because they are not in the recent mode of

JOHN GIELGUD *as Thomas—is he the devil?*

PAMELA BROWN *as Jennet—is she a witch?*

playwriting, not because there is anything original about them; and so a member of the audience, listening to the play for the first time, may ignore them, and by ignoring them turn the play into something slightly different, for better or worse. But the play remains, I hope, an evening's entertainment whether you notice these aspects or not. They came about because the play I set out to write demanded them, not because I have any particular theories about playwriting.

I set out to write a play which would be first cousin to an artificial comedy. I had just finished writing a tragedy of character and

1 *Thomas insists on his right to be hanged for murder*

2 *Jennet, suspected of witchcraft, arrives on the scene*

3 *The chaplain meets the assassin*

4 *The prisoners are a problem—Jennet upsets all the men, young and old*

5 *There is violence in the town because of the lovely witch*

6 *Humphrey, too, is in love with Jennet*

7 *But it all ends happily none the less*

action, and I wanted a change of air. Most, if not all, artificial comedies are concerned with a material world. They may mention God and death in passing, but broadly and in detail they treat of a world which excludes the Universe and ignores the mysterious foundation of existence. I could see no reason though, writing such a comedy, why I should not treat of the world as I see it, a world in which we are all poised on the edge of eternity, a world which has deeps and shadows of mystery, in which God is anything but a sleeping-partner. Everybody in the play (except at first the heroine), even the old drunk, the rag-and-bone man, takes this state of affairs for granted, and talks, and makes jokes, on these terms. When they talk of damnation and the soul, they mean real things, as real to them as the chairs they sit on; and if anyone thinks this is a high-brow way to write a play, then every breath we breathe is high-brow; we are being high-brow when we are born, when we mate or when we die. If this aspect of the comedy is overlooked, then nothing very much can seem to happen to the hero and the heroine, except that they fall in love. But, in fact, a good deal happens to them, or at any rate as much as a comedy, first-cousin to the artificial, can hold. They start by having two opposing views of life; they end by fusing them and creating a third view. But I do not want to lay too great a stress on the gravity of all this. It should be taken as lightly and casually as the theme of any other light comedy, just as the witch-hunt and the torture and the threat of burning had to be treated lightly and casually in the writing if they were to be kept from exploding utterly the manner of the play. Otherwise the play would have been two plays quarrelling within one frame.

The second aspect I have in mind is more difficult to discuss; either you see it, or not, and if you do not, nobody can make you, and nobody is the worse off. It is this: I have tried to make the words and the deeds of the characters move all the time with a sense of the particular moment at which they are said or done, so that we can be aware continually of the April afternoon, for example, with the scents and sounds of it, or of the April evening and night as the play goes on: moreover, to make these scents and sounds an essential part of the action, conditioning the words of the characters. For instance, Thomas Mendip in Act II stands at the window watching and describing to Jennet the dusk which has descended on the Cotswolds, and his treatment of her in the ensuing scene is conditioned by that, leading him to rally her with such lines as:

> This evening is a ridiculous wisp of down
> Blowing in the air as disconsolately as dust.

leading him, indeed, eventually to a perplexity of his own, to the discovery that, although he finds life intolerable, yet 'Something condones the world, incorrigibly.'

There is nothing in the least new about any of this, of course, but the use of it in recent years has not been frequent, and the unexpected can sometimes stare us in the face and not be noticed; it is easy enough to see no connection between a lyrical passage about the dusk and the action that follows it. There is nothing new about it, and there is nothing at all unusual about it. In everyday life, our moods, and the words and deeds that spring from them, are often evidently governed by the atmosphere or the weather or the season of the year. Nothing is absolutely itself; everything carries with it a proportion of its neighbourhood; and sometimes passages where the comedy seems merely to be standing still, with a handful of embroidery and a vacant stare, are passages where it is moving most surely forward.

Why should I use poetry instead of plain prose? Well, if we have to be born into a world as wildly unprosaic as this one is, what else can be done, if we mean to be realistic?

CHRISTOPHER FRY

THE CRITIC REPLIES

POETS in the theatre seem lately to have been barking up several wrong trees. Granted that prose, in the narrow sense of the word, has become pretty threadbare on the stage, there was still no need to swing

right over to that kind of 'verse play' whose accent is all on the verse. What is the good, for example, of a programme note explaining that the playwright is using a hundred and one Provençal metres never before used in English, if the Provençal metres are mere hurdles for the actors to get over somehow? Similarly, poetry may or may not mean 'high seriousness', but if high seriousness means standing on a pillar like St. Simeon Stylites, then it will not do for the stage which, whatever its vertical possibilities, must also have some horizontals. This wrong-headedness on the part of some poetic playwrights, this austerity which saves one the trouble of entertaining, derives not only from an ignorance of, or contempt for, the theatre, but also from a misconception of the nature of poetry and from a snobbish obsession with the difference between 'verse' and 'prose'. It is certainly high time we remembered that the highest drama contains a lyrical element, but do not let us forget that the poem proper, the lyric, is in itself *dramatic*. Both lyric and play are dialectical unities, and what really matters in both is the unity, the organism. It is therefore enormously refreshing to meet a poetic play where the poetry is *of* and not merely *in* the play, not superimposed but organic. So we cannot be too grateful to Mr. Fry for *The Lady's Not for Burning*.

The production of this play at the Globe Theatre was my first encounter with Mr. Fry's work, and I went to it slightly prejudiced because some silly people who had seen it at the Arts Theatre told me that it was all a flux of words. Apparently people are so unaccustomed to words which have a life of their own that they cannot perceive the other lives behind them. This play has ideas, situation, characterisation, and, above all, what Mr. Fry himself calls 'climate'. And it is the words that put these things over. This may seem strange to the modern theatre-goer who is used to reading everything between the lines—and the lines are so thin that he has plenty of room—but it was of course the regular procedure of playwrights in all the great periods of drama. Traditionally, it was the words that did it; they could do it, admittedly, in different ways—mainly by rhythm, mainly by rhetoric, or mainly by imagery. All three methods are due for a revival, but it is the third that is Mr. Fry's speciality. His dialogue is one unceasing flow of images, images of all kinds—sensuous, cerebral, hyperbolical, frivolous—and, though some of them misfire and a few are weak or cheap and maybe quite a number get lost by the wayside, this imagery is integral to the play. And it is a great feat to have invented a language of images which works for all the characters all of the time. This is now rare in experimental plays, where the high moments and the flat moments, the highbrow characters and the lowbrow characters, usually just do not tally with each other.

The Lady's Not For Burning is a comedy—and a very funny one—but like many of the best comedies, such as *The Playboy of the Western World*, it is also moving; it does not narrow in like Mr. Coward, but widens out like—whom shall we say?—Shakespeare. Mr. Fry has fulfilled the intentions recorded in his article; this may be 'first cousin to an artificial comedy' but the uncle in the case was a bit of a sport. The Globe production has brought out the comedy excellently but has not, I think, done full justice to the other thing; there was something missing in the very last scene between the hero and the heroine, well played as they were by Mr. Gielgud and Miss Pamela Brown; this *envoi* surely needs a more lyrical lift. There were no weak vessels in the cast and some of the minor parts were filled to admiration, notably by Mr. Eliot Makeham, Mr. Esmé Percy and Mr. Richard Burton. But this was no more than these parts deserved since Mr. Fry's 'climate' falls as fresh on one line as it does on a full-length speech. The Chaplain, for instance, whom Mr. Fry describes in his Foreword to the published play as 'as sweet and uncertain as church-bells on a windy day', is a most sympathetic creation who plays no 'essential' (i.e. no mechanical) part in the 'plot' but who more than pulls his weight in the play. For a play is much more than its plot, as this play so healthily reminds us.

LOUIS MACNEICE

The text of the play is published in book form by the Oxford University Press (6s.)

This is the first of three articles, by Germany's leading philosopher, to commemorate the bi-centenary of the birth of Germany's greatest poet

GOETHE and our future (1)

KARL JASPERS

A EUROPEAN and human catastrophe which Marx awaited as a gateway to ultimate salvation, which Kierkegaard and Nietzsche understood at a deep level, and Niebuhr, Stendhal, Toqueville and Burckhardt saw with ever-increasing clarity, was already becoming dimly apparent to the mind of Goethe in his later years.

Such ideas and premonitions of coming catastrophe receive their full weight only as one element in a total conception of history, as part of a total picture in which the future is the empty space to which everything that has been in the past presses on inevitably and relentlessly.

Prehistoric time, of which we have only scanty information, ranges back into untold millennia. The evolution of man is full of antimonies, which are simply beyond the present capacity of our minds to understand. But in this long period of prehistory, the foundations of our inborn human nature were laid.

Looking back on the more clearly-illuminated period of the last three thousand years, we can see that we are still at the very beginning of human history. It is true that we stand at the end of this wonderful period with its three independent sources in China, India and Europe, containing the whole content of our present traditions and without which we feel ourselves sliding down the path leading straight to nothingness. But we are, in fact, only at the beginning of the development of this tradition, which is undergoing the most deep-rooted transformation in our own time.

We can state with absolute certainty that the technical age to which we belong represents the deepest incision into human history that has ever taken place. The external changes are obvious. From now on, the planet is a single whole, and all human life dependent on the world which man has himself produced without deliberately planning it as it has come to be. Our whole existence is being revolutionised as never before by new methods of production and by the changes in the organisation of work and the organisation of society. The continuity of the past has come to an abrupt end. One sign of this is that the planet has now been, as it were, disposed of; there are no unexplored and unexploited areas to which man can migrate any longer: that safety valve has been closed, and the universal tension rises. We are still quite unable to discern what is really happening as the result of modern technics and what is happening at the same time in the human mind. The first, but certainly not the last, symptom of what is taking place is the total nihilism which Nietzsche was one of the first to perceive as a reality.

No one knows what will become of man after this deepest incision into human history. We can at least be certain that all human visions of the future are wrong. The future is always different from the content of human speculation. For man is able to carry

through inward revolutions and rebirths of the spirit in leaps and bounds which no purely intellectual reasoning can foresee. If human imagination were able to anticipate the reality of the future, it would also be able to create the future.

Let us now look at our own situation as it lies in the shadow of the whole historically recorded past and of the expected future. The Germans stand, within the total human process, in a peculiar world-political situation: in the historical transition from European national-states to world powers we have taken our leave as a great power and for all time, since the absolute destruction of our military power has taken place in a unique moment in history. More than that, we find ourselves in a desperate situation, to be compared perhaps only with that of the Jews after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the deportation of a part of their population to Babylon. Unlike the Jews, however, we have no sacred book to hold us together as a people.

What will become of us?

EITHER we shall slide down still further as an amorphous mass, hating ourselves, being used up by others and finally disappearing altogether, without honour and despised in the memory of the world; or we shall come to an inward revolution of the spirit and thus to a life which is still possible even in the midst of outward impotence and under difficult conditions of material life. I shall make the following points about this inner revolution which will, and must, decide our future value and standing as a nation:

1. Such revolutions of the spirit are not produced *en masse* by purely external measures or by so-called 're-education'. They cannot be willed or planned at all. The problem cannot, in fact, be treated as a single whole. It is primarily the concern of each individual. Although we are dependent on others as never before, we have also been thrown back on our own resources as individuals. Each of us must know that it all depends on him or her. With no longer any security on reliable and stable conditions of custom, law and order and often being shouted at with the slogans of a multiplicity of *Weltanschauungs*, the individual can only give a value to himself through the seriousness which he applies to the shaping of his own life. If that happens, then a community will be formed of individuals sharing knowledge of each other, and the substance of God-related life will be reborn.

2. It depends on the here and now. Man demands actuality. Except in external matters, he cannot wait for the future. He must not be deceived by illusive promises of a brighter future. He serves the future only by living out his philosophy in the present.

3. The condition for this inward revolution of the spirit is that we should be clear about the situation as it has developed historically, our human situation generally, and our German situation in particular. We must not say: 'Let us leave the past to look after itself, let us not look backwards, but forwards.' For the 'forwards', the future has a chance only in so far as the past is assimilated and overcome. Reflection on the past must be twofold: it must consist in seeing through the idols to which we had become enslaved, and in living with the great minds of the past who, by the high demands they make upon us, bring us to the discovery of our own real selves.

In the present catastrophe, however, nothing of the past has survived unshaken. Every relationship, even to the best and greatest of our ancestors and to the most valid of our traditions, needs to be re-examined and reassimilated.

Foremost of the Germans of the past is Goethe. How will Goethe help us on our way into the future? Perhaps a culture based on Goethe such as we have known in the past can never be repeated; perhaps it was even in some ways a disaster. Perhaps a new assimilation of Goethe is required. It seems to me that this process has, in fact, already begun.

Although he is the greatest German lyric poet, and in spite of the world-wide appreciation of his *Faust*, Goethe does not stand as an equal beside Homer, Dante and Shakespeare on the basis of one special type

of work. But he is unrivalled as far as the incomparable unity of his work and personality is concerned: this unity in which poetry, scientific research, art and practical activity are constituent elements. Perhaps he is indeed the only man in history to have achieved such complete self-realisation and at the same time to be so concretely visible in the documents of his life as well as having become a kind of symbol of humanity on its highest level through his own presentation of himself. When we read his works, his letters and conversations and eye-witness accounts of him, the man stands before us so concretely, from childhood to old age, as if we had met him in person in all the different phases of his life. He can stand being known on intimate terms, and he grows in stature the better we know him.

It is as though it was intended that a single human being should be so thoroughly knowable that nothing human would ever seem to be secret any longer. And yet, the more we know him, the greater becomes the mystery. The constant self-communication of this infinitely rich mind conceals a deep silence. We try in vain to define Goethe's character. He seems as infinite as Nature herself. His character is full of tensions, polarities and contradictions. His work is almost like the Bible—in which we never find our way about if we apply the criterion of logical consistency, look for an absence of contradictions and expect to meet a fixed and definable point of view.

The essential mystery is, however, not such that it can be resolved by increasing knowledge of the facts. The extraordinarily comprehensive documentation of Goethe's life and thought has one significant result: it means that Goethe's life can never become a legend or a myth. He is a verifiable reality, preserved in every detail in the records of an enlightened age and in accordance with his own will, the object of never-ending investigation and research. We therefore refuse to accept a Goethe divorced from the fully documented reality, or to add any fanciful details to the record of his life. There is certainly reality enough in the records to put a stop to fanciful invention.

It is right that we should read Goethe every year, read his works, his letters and conversations, and thus participate in his life. He will then become a helpful friend in all the phases of our life. To live with Goethe is perhaps what first makes us truly human and truly German. But it is not easy. Goethe's world has passed away. A Goethe was possible only in such a world. We are entitled to love him and his world, and to move about in it only if we never forget that it is not our world and that it will never return. Goethe's world was the conclusion of thousands of years of European history—a final consummation, and yet a reality that was already passing into a farewell and a memory in Goethe's own lifetime. It is the world out of which our world has emerged, it is true, but from which ours has already become so distant that Goethe seems to stand nearer to Homer than to us. Although our own immediate ancestors, some of them almost known to us in the flesh, lived in that world, yet it seems to come out of a fairy tale, telling of a way of life which is already quite foreign to us, but to which we still feel a deep spiritual relationship. To live in that world which is so completely of the past gives us standards for our lives, but not a way of life which is any longer applicable to the conditions of our world today.

Our task is to assimilate Goethe's world by translating his truth into the language and conditions of our own world. Goethe could be lost to us only if we were not merely to move into the utterly different conditions of the modern world, but were also to abandon the basic human experiences which formed the pattern of his world, if we were to lose all experience of real love, of the victories of goodness, and were to reject the demand for continual self-education through self-knowledge.

Goethe can still be a present reality for us in the following ways:

He helps us to liberate ourselves from our immediate nature, in order to be reborn in the spiritual. Sluggishness of heart is impossible when Goethe is near. He teaches us

to see the real nature of the other man, to let him be himself, to take pleasure in him and not to judge him by extraneous standards. He helps us not to lose ourselves in fancies and delusions of a distant future, but to become real and authentic in the present. He teaches us not to lose the tangible reality of the present for the sake of an illusive future.

He induces us to sober contemplation when we are confused; he teaches us to stand away from ourselves and to take for granted the practical activity the day demands of us.

He teaches us moderation and self-denial, and so brings us to concentrate on what is essential for us.

We learn to see reality more clearly and become more open to men and things.

A final 'no' to life is impossible.

'However it may be, life is good.'

In the presence of Goethe we feel all the seeds of goodness within us stimulated into growth. We breathe an atmosphere of love for everything that is, for man and the world. We are able to listen more keenly to the language of the Godhead in all things.

(*To be continued*)

HUGO MANNING

MADRIGAL

Between tumult of fire
And tumult of stone,
What matutinal bird calls
My sleeping power?

O bright and fair
Are the towers of your limbs,
But brighter and more fair
The graces of your heart.

Lean, my love, lean
On my waiting arm
And let us depart
From the cold, doomed valley
Where the world's weeping flower
Like a poisoned bird,
Lies at our feet,
Alone, alone.

And listen, listen—
Wind and sea and stars rejoice,
O sing without anger
Love's pleasure and psalm.

O fair heart, come
To the bright hill of dreams
Where wonder and wisdom
Forever kiss and meet!

Notes from Far Away

A SOUTH-EAST ASIAN TRAVELOGUE

WOODROW WYATT, M.P.

TRAVEL broadens the mind; but travel that is too speedy almost extinguishes it. However often I go by air, I cannot believe it is possible to be shivering at nine o'clock one night and to be sweating in Bombay twenty-four hours later. The evidence of my eyes is against me—orderly London to streets with brown homeless lying at their edges wrapped in bundles of white cloth—but the transition is too rapid for my comprehension. The effect of unreality is heightened by the slick efficiency of the air lines. 'You are going to Calcutta? The plane leaves in three-and-a-half hours' time. We have booked a room for you at the Taj Mahal.' You weakly ask why: the journey from the airfield to the hotel is three quarters of an hour each way; there will be no time for sleep. The protests fall unheeded on the warm night air, and soon the airways bus has deposited you at the entrance of the Taj Mahal Hotel and you are signing the register and staring, wonderingly, at the huge notice on the desk, 'South Africans not admitted'. Calcutta follows shortly and within thirty-six hours London, Cairo and Bombay are jerky memories. Reality begins to return with the first drink—whisky, 7s. 6d., or a bottle of beer, 7s. 3d. Strange, very strange—drink used to be cheaper than in England. Then I remembered the reservation I used to make to my Indian friends about independence. 'I can see only one argument against Indian freedom—you will introduce prohibition.' And now they have started. Calcutta has begun by the oblique method of rising taxation, Madras by going dry altogether, Bombay by having some days for drinking and some for abstinence. So, I think, I must be in India now. This is familiar ground—I must stop refusing to believe in air travel. But at the 400 Club that night confusion rises again. The dancers and the diners are the usual mingling of well-to-do Hindus and Muslims with members of the British business community and their wives. But who is the woman I have been introduced to and am now sitting next to? Mme. Something, the French Consul's wife. But I have seen that face before. Yes, it is Alice Delysia. Now, are we in London, Paris or Calcutta?

Of all South-East Asia, India and Pakistan are the most stable areas. This was my first visit to India since independence. The last time had been with the Cabinet mission in its long-drawn-out negotiations of 1946, conducted in the suspicious atmosphere, and heat at 110–120 in the shade, of New Delhi. I was interested to see if there would be any difference I could detect at once, and there was. It was an assurance among the people, in their looks and the way they talked, that was new, and that you could definitely feel. They were not arrogant, but more balanced and minus much of the old inferiority complex. At a party in New Delhi, on the way back from South-East Asia, an Indian senior Civil Servant and an Army officer asked me how they thought about India in England now. 'Mostly like me, I think,' was my answer, 'very proud. We're glad

that India is making out so well, and that we left her with a sound administrative structure which you have had the sense to retain. We're proud you are staying in the Commonwealth.' India is a country you can feel confidence in. Her leaders have experience and wisdom—her people, unlike most in that part of the world, are adult. When I was in India during the war, anti-British feeling was at its height. Now that it has served its purpose in the struggle for independence, it has been discarded. Flicking through the pages of an ultra-Indian periodical in an airliner, I was amazed at the treatment of such subjects as Indian history and the use of the English language in India. British historians, the readers were informed, were responsible for building up what is known of Indian history and without them there would be none; through the English language had come all India's knowledge of the noble concepts of freedom, and it should be retained as the permanent second language—best learned by children from birth simultaneously with their mother tongue. No one would have dared write like that three years ago.

BUT in Burma they have thrown the baby out with the bath water. British officials were dismissed, who would have been willing to stay, and with whose aid much of the present administrative muddle could have been avoided. The student politicians shout anti-Imperialist slogans as though British rule were still there. Much of the country seems to believe that British business in Burma is organising some dark plot to overthrow the Government. Yet even here some common sense is beginning to shine through. The leaders, at any rate, realise the value of the British connection and are learning that British democracy is a better friend than Russian or Chinese Communism. They also have learned the hard way, that it is not much use taking over foreign businesses unless they can either provide the capital and the technicians or reach some agreement with the British owners who can. But it is difficult for them to explain this to their excited and undisciplined followers. Nevertheless, among the violent anti-British sentiments, little oases of Britain remain. 'Will you lunch with the President of the Union of Burma on Thursday?' said the voice on the telephone. 'Delighted.' 'But,' went on the voice, 'you have not signed the Book, and until you do, we cannot send the invitation.' The Book is an institution maintained by British Viceroys, High Commissioners, Governors. The important, and the self-important, sign it to let the Government House staff know they have arrived in the district and that they hope for an invitation to dinner or, at the least, to a cocktail party. I did not expect to find this distinctly snobbish contrivance still flourishing in Socialistic and, at the beginning, near-Communistic Republican Burma. And the luncheon itself . . . We were met at the door of what used to be the British Governor's house by an A.D.C. and taken into the lounge hall. There we had drinks and waited for the President to appear. Just before his arrival, the A.D.Cs marshalled all the guests into formal lines for presentation. Afterwards, the seating arrangements, the glasses, the silver, the menus were exactly the same as if it had still been a British Government house. Even the plates had the British Imperial Crowns on them, and the port went round the right way.

However inconvenient they may be, British ideals have left their mark wherever the British have been in the East. In Burma it would have suited the successors of the British to have had a sort of dictatorship of the proletariat. But it was impossible for them—they had absorbed too much of Britain. They could not bring themselves to tamper enough with the Civil Service. They could not conceive of a judiciary under the control of the Government; they could not dispense with elections, and they felt it would be undemocratic not to give compensation for requisitioned industries. And it is not merely on the system of government that the British have made their impact. In Mandalay there is a famous hill covered with temples and stairways from top to bottom. It is sacred because the Lord Buddha

visited it, and a female ogre living on it was so overcome by his nearness that she cut off her breasts and presented them to him as a sacrifice and as evidence of a change of heart. The stairways and most of the pagodas have been built in the last fifty years from subscriptions collected by U Khanti, a holyman of superlative organising ability. The day we went there he was ill (he died the same night), and we were shown him lying on his rough bed in a dim, dark, cave-like room. Because he was prostrate, his secretary was our escort. The mood was solemn; the surroundings were of great sanctity. The secretary explained in a reverent voice the meaning of each statue, of each shrine. Then he suddenly turned to me and said, 'Arsenal are not doing very well this year', and launched into a long and knowledgeable dissertation on recent transfer fees and the form of various English soccer clubs.

In Mandalay it was sad to see the palace of the Burmese kings in heaps of rubble, although the ancient cannon still stood outside it. But the tall, grey-pink walls which surround it in the form of a square, with sides one-and-a-quarter miles long, had survived the fighting between the Japanese and the British. So also had the old British Guest House where we stayed. Built to accommodate officers on tour, it has known three races—British, Japanese and Burmese. The Japanese tenant was the Chief of Secret Police, and he used a part of the house as a torture chamber. Regularly the neighbours and passers-by heard the shrieks coming from it. Yet it looked clean and wholesome till I heard its history. Then it seemed sinister and dangerous, and not even laughter at the astrologer, a grandson of a Burmese court astrologer, whose prerequisite to telling your fortune was to measure your height by the sun, could dispel the uneasiness.

In Burma the food is good and plentiful and cooked well in Burmese curries. The chief delicacy is a powdery substance made of dried and decayed prawns and then highly flavoured. It is unwise to take too large a mouthful until acclimatised. But the best cooks in South-East Asia, or in Asia, or in the world for that matter, are the Chinese. Some secret which has been denied to the other races enables them to prepare ten-to-fifteen-course meals so perfectly balanced that you do not feel you have eaten excessively at the end of them. The exquisiteness of a real Chinese dinner is marred only by a dish which sometimes begins it—black eggs. The eggs are black because they have been buried for years in the ground. And they taste as you would expect eggs that have been treated that way to taste. The Chinese claim that they are good for the digestion—most Europeans would comment, 'too good'. But I shall not forget some Chinese dinners, particularly one in Singapore. There was boneless chicken stuffed with birds' nests (made by swallows against the rocks, from regurgitated sea-weed), sharks' fins, whole roast sucking pigs and a great deal more besides. The impression that everyone in the East lives on a handful of rice a day is fallacious. In Burma ordinary people get more to eat than British workers; in Malaya they would probably get not much less. But poverty is acute in other ways, and in India and Pakistan and other countries of the region it includes near starvation as well. That is why social reforms to raise the standard of living in India are so urgent if the sound structure she enjoys today is not to be toppled over by the Communism that breeds on distress.

I sometimes wonder if the economic condition of a country can be judged by the price of its taxi-cabs. England has the strongest economic position in Europe, and the cabs in London are among the cheapest in the world. In New Delhi it costs twenty-five to thirty shillings for a journey of six miles. In Rangoon I paid six shillings a mile. In prosperous Singapore the cabs were little Morris Eights, and there were so many of them that the drivers continually undercut each other—almost down to London prices. In Bangkok the price was high but not excessive by Asian standards. Inquiry into comparative costs of tri-shaws and cabs produces astonishing results. For some journeys

(Continued on page 78)

Co-ownership

IS THIS THE ANSWER TO THE ECONOMIC

'THE most rational works organisation in the most colossal style and the most complicated machines,' writes Professor Röpke in his most penetrating and pertinent book, *Civitas Humana*, 'are equally valueless if we lose sight of coefficient α (anthropos)—the human factor—which finally turns the scale in this just as in any other form of human organisation.' His words go right to the heart of our present situation.

We are faced by two great problems—the one economic, the other human. Our *economic* problem is how to increase production in order to be able to pay our way and maintain (and ultimately improve) our standard of living. Our *human* problem is how to make life for the millions employed in industry really satisfying, giving them scope for their 'personhood' and the sense of belonging. Success in solving the first of these problems depends on solving the second. It is 'coefficient α—the human factor'—that will turn the scale in the battle for production.

Production has been stepped up—but not nearly enough. In the recent White Paper (Economic Survey for 1949) an increase of 2½ per cent was aimed at. But this is gravely inadequate. Experts calculate the latent productivity of British industry at anything between 10 and 25 per cent of present output. If we could pull out even the 10 per cent, our economic problem would be solved. The fact that even the most optimistic among our planners hope for no more than 2½ per cent demonstrates the sluggishness of the human factor. How is it to be galvanised? That is the question which confronts all of us—consumers, taxpayers, Ministers, employers, managers, trade-unionists. There is only one answer—'Co-ownership'.

It has become clear that nationalisation—hitherto the cure-all of the Labour Party—is not going to solve the problem. It does not give the worker any greater sense of ownership in the enterprise in which he is engaged than he possessed before, nor does it do anything appreciable to lift his status. In the coal-mining industry, for instance, although wages and working conditions have been improved, the worker remains a cog. The only difference is that he has become a cog in a bigger and more impersonal machine than before. Similarly in the gas industry, where the Government has actually abolished the co-partnership schemes which brought so much benefit and contentment, and has rejected the plea that the workers should be represented on the Area Boards. In many respects, indeed, 'coefficient α' appears to be even more neglected under nationalisation than under private enterprise.

IN their 'Industrial Charter', on the other hand, the Conservatives talk about 'humanising' industry instead of nationalising it. But for all their brave words, they offer no concrete proposals for action. All that they suggest is that Parliament should be asked to approve a code of industrial good behaviour, which employers would be free to observe or ignore at their will. They give their blessing to the 'principles' of profit-sharing and co-partnership, but raise up hands of horror when it is proposed to enforce these principles by Act of Parliament. Not surprisingly, the workers refuse to believe that they mean business.

It has been left to the Liberal Party—so sparsely represented in Parliament, yet so much more representative of the real sentiments of the country than either of its bigger rivals—to put forward a programme of action, designed to ensure that all engaged in an industrial undertaking shall share in its

ELLIOTT DODDS

In Industry

AND HUMAN PROBLEMS IN PRODUCTION?

direction and fortunes. This programme, which was set out in detail in a resolution passed by the Liberal Assembly at Blackpool last year and confirmed by an enormous majority at the recent Assembly at Hastings, is explained in a report called 'People in Industry',[1] published a few weeks ago. Its gist is as follows.

If a Liberal Government were returned to power, one of its first measures would be to pass an Act of Parliament requiring every industrial concern with a capital of not less than £50,000, and/or not less than fifty employees, to submit a scheme of 'Co-ownership' to a specially-appointed Commission for approval. No attempt would be made to impose one uniform or rigid pattern. Firms would be invited to produce their own schemes, and the utmost variety and flexibility would be allowed for. All firms, however, coming within the scope of the Act, would be required to conform to certain principles. These principles are:

1. That employees should be paid at least the Trade Union or statutory minimum wages applicable to the particular trade, including any negotiated bonuses or additions.

2. That, after due provision had been made for reserves and other proper purposes, including the payment of preference share dividends and of a return related to the gilt-edged rate (cumulative for two years) on the ordinary shares, the remaining profits should be apportioned between those actively engaged in the concern and the ordinary shareholders.

3. That encouragement should be given to employee-shareholders.

4. That all persons over twenty-one years of age who had been employed in the business for at least three years should be entitled to elective representation on the Board of Directors—where such existed—and that consultative machinery should be operative at all levels.

If a firm was able to satisfy the Commission that it was impracticable for it to introduce such a scheme, it would be granted a certificate of exemption.

Such, in brief, is the Liberal programme of action. Several aspects of it call for special emphasis. In the first place, it is to be noted that, if carried into effect, it would assure the workers their share in profits and control *by right*, and not by the benevolence of their employers. This is fundamental. It is *wrong*, Liberals assert, that all the profits should belong to the shareholders, who, unless they are actively working in the concern, play no active part in promoting its efficiency and prosperity. It is *wrong* that the workers should be deprived of any degree of ownership in the undertaking where they labour, and should be mere hirelings, however well paid and however well looked after. The great injury done by the Industrial Revolution was the divorce of labour from ownership, and the proletarianisation which this brought about. Hence has arisen the workers' resentment against 'the capitalist system'. This injury can only be remedied by restoring to the worker some real proprietorship in his place of work, in the product of his hand, and in the tools he uses. That can be done only by Co-ownership.

SECONDLY, without the recognition of this moral claim, there is no hope of ending the war between Labour and Capital. Higher wages, improved conditions, will not do it. Neither satisfies the *human* demand of Labour, which is concerned less with remuneration than status. Profit-sharing is indeed the less important element in Co-ownership. The right to a voice in control is the more vital. This goes to the very root

[1] 'People in Industry' (Liberal Publication Department, 1s.)

of 'the labour problem', as the dissatisfaction in the nationalised industries demonstrates. Some employers seem to take for granted that the Capital-versus-Labour relationship in private industry is unalterable. This is a counsel of despair. If events should prove it correct, then the days of private industry would infallibly be numbered. Unless private industry can satisfy the workers' claims to be taken in as partners, then it will be superseded by nationalised industry. There is no other alternative.

It follows that, by Co-ownership alone, can the latent productivity of industry be called out—that latent productivity which, as we have seen, *must* be evoked if we are to balance our accounts and raise our standard of living.

THE word 'workers' has hitherto been employed in its common use of 'wage-earners', but it must be stressed that, within the terms of the Co-ownership proposals, it includes '*all* actively engaged in the concern.' This means directors and management as well as wage-earners. After Labour and Capital had received their standard rate, *all* would share in the distributable profits proportionately to their remuneration and length of service. Thus the managers (using the word in its widest sense) would stand to gain materially. The man of enterprise who had put his labour and savings into his own business would get his share of the pool proportionately to his salary and investment, as well as the gilt-edged rate. The skilled technician would be fully rewarded. As is only just, the passive shareholder, whose sole contribution to the business is his lending of money, would have to go shares with those working in it, but if, as there is every reason to anticipate, productivity, and with it profits, increased, he would not on balance be likely to suffer any loss. In fact, he would probably do better.

These facts rebut the objection that the generalisation of Co-ownership would discourage investment. It is much more likely that it would have the opposite effect. With the assurance of willing co-operative work by all and freedom from industrial stoppages, not only the productivity but the stability of industry would be increased, and this should actually encourage investment. Moreover, as employee-shareholding spread, it would offer a solution of the threatening problem of capital shortage. The workers' savings would be brought in to make good loss due to the reduction of large incomes, and the consequent fall in the savings of the rich are available for investment.

One final point calls for discussion. A good many people, while ready to agree that the spread of Co-ownership would be a good thing, object to the idea of compulsion. This objection—on the part of Liberals especially—is natural. No Liberal likes compulsion for its own sake. It goes against the grain in a party whose very name is identified with freedom. Nevertheless, when this issue was re-fought at the Liberal Assembly last March, the majority against a resolution seeking to take the compulsory clause out of the Co-ownership proposals was crushing.

The reasons are clear. In the first place, consideration has shown that Co-ownership is unlikely to be generalised in any foreseeable future unless powers to enforce it exist in the background. For all the propaganda which has been undertaken by the advocates of profit-sharing, only two per cent of the firms in this country have as yet adopted it. We cannot afford to wait any longer and see what persuasion will do. The sands are running out. Unless effective steps are taken soon, we shall lose the chance to reform private industry in such a way as to assure full production, and all-round nationalisation will be upon us. Whether that would produce the goods, in terms either of human satisfaction or of material output, is (to put it mildly) more than doubtful.

Secondly, unless legislative action is contemplated, the *political* advocacy of Co-ownership loses all point. It is left (as the Conservatives leave it) in the vast inane of platitude and aspiration. Politics consists of what is done in Parliament, and a party which espouses the 'principles' of profit-sharing and co-partnership, but makes it

clear that it does not mean to do anything about them, renders itself ridiculous.

It has been suggested that the generalisation of profit-sharing and co-partnership might be promoted by financial inducements, and at first glance this suggestion has obvious attractions. The more, however, it is examined, the more its futility becomes apparent. The reasons are given in the Report already referred to (*People in Industry*). 'The Committee,' says this report, 'gave much attention to possible inducements, but the only one that seemed at all feasible was that by fiscal rebates. If, however, there were to be any prospect of these rebates proving effective, they would have to be very substantial, and conversely would involve penalties on prosperous firms which refused to introduce Co-ownership that would virtually amount to compulsion. On the other hand, for those firms whose profits were small, tax reduction would be a very slender inducement, while those earning no profits would have no inducement at all.[1] If, again, the adoption of schemes was caused by the bait of tax reduction, some firms might operate a scheme in one year when the rebate would be worth-while, and cease to operate it in the following year if profits dropped and the rebate was therefore less attractive. Finally, if, as is anticipated, company taxation is materially reduced during the next few years in the interests of national economic policy, the margin for inducement through further tax remission would be negligible.'

On these grounds the Committee came to the conclusion that 'the only fair and effective way of introducing Co-ownership as a national measure is to bring all firms of the stipulated size into the scheme together, by legislation that would leave no loopholes which certain firms might use to the detriment of their employees.'

The point of fairness is crucial. Many firms today would be quite willing to introduce Co-ownership if they were satisfied that their competitors would do the same, but, believing that the adoption of the system would mean a loss to their shareholders, they are not prepared to be the first to put their toes into the water. As previously argued, there is good reason to believe that —in the long run at any rate—shareholders would gain rather than lose by the adoption of Co-ownership, but all the same this attitude is quite natural. If the interests of the nation demand that Co-ownership should be applied on the national scale, then it is only right that all firms of the stipulated size should be required to adopt the system together.

After all, the cases in which the compulsory powers suggested would have to be used would be very few. The fact that they were in the background would in most instances be sufficient. Moreover, as already pointed out, firms would enjoy the utmost latitude in producing their own schemes, provided the fundamental principles were observed, and any which could show that it was not practicable for them to introduce a scheme would be granted exemption. There is no suggestion of the Government's interfering in the day-to-day running of industry. All that it would do would be to lay down the rules—as it does already with the Factory Acts and other industrial legislation—and within these rules industry would be completely self-governing. The difference would be that all engaged in a firm would share in its government, so that industrial democracy would supersede industrial feudalism.

These Liberal proposals have been described as involving a revolution—and so indeed they do. But it would be a revolution of a peaceful, and a wholly beneficial, character. The revolution proposed by the Socialists, which means bringing all industry under the State, would be merely another turn of the wheel which is carrying us towards the Servile Society. It would be a *real* revolution (in Eric Gill's words) 'to abolish the proletariat by making all men owners.' Sharing in profits, sharing also in control, they would have that 'saving sense of proprietorship' which is both their moral right and the greatest incentive to all-out production. Co-ownership would solve the economic problem and the human problem. They can only be solved together.

[1] It is emphasised in the Report that profit-sharing is only one feature of Co-ownership, and that it is even more important when no or small profits are being made that the other features should be operating, so that the workers may 'know the score' and feel confident that they are getting a square deal.

Does modern art suggest that the uneasiness caused by facing the problem of man's cosmic predicament brings about a return to the 'primitive' state of mind ?

PRIMITIVE AND MODERN ART

HERBERT READ

An exhibition was recently held in London under the title 'Forty Thousand Years of Modern Art'. The organisers were the Institute of Contemporary Arts, and this challenging title was meant to indicate, and the exhibits to demonstrate, a profound truth—the truth that art, in its essential qualities, has not changed since it made its first appearance in prehistoric times. Art, of course, assumes many superficial and secondary characteristics that are to be explained as effects of social fashion and economic structure, but these are, as it were, only the clothes on the body of art, which in itself remains as unchanged as the human form. There is, however, in art as in the human form, a certain polarity or contradiction—it has no relation to the male-female polarity in mankind, but it is equally fundamental. It is the contrast between image and symbol, between naturalistic and abstract modes of expression. It is as old as art itself.

This same contrast has reappeared in modern art, but not as an exclusive manifestation of aesthetic modes of expression. That is to say, we have today both naturalistic and abstract types of art, existing side by side, and sometimes interpenetrating to form a mixed style. It may be that ours is a transitional period, and that mankind is gradually entering an epoch in which all art will be anti-naturalistic. Or it may be that the modern world, with its lack of a unified consciousness, will continue to permit the free expression of both aesthetic attitudes. One cannot prophesy in such matters, but it is already evident, after half a century of experiment, that an anti-naturalistic (abstract or super-realistic) type of art has come to stay for a considerable time. Such a type of art is not a passing craze or fashion; it corresponds to a deeply-rooted metaphysical attitude, such as we find also in contemporary philosophy (existentialism in particular).

It has been generally assumed that anti-naturalistic types of modern art were the result of certain concrete influences—for example, that Picasso saw certain examples of Negro sculpture and was so impressed that he began to paint in a similar 'abstract' style, and that the whole of the contemporary abstract movement (Cubism, Constructivism, etc.) developed from this casual encounter. Similarly, Fauvism and Surrealism are supposed to have developed from other types of primitive art. The recent exhibition was intended to demonstrate the falsity or superficiality of this view. It did not altogether succeed, partly because it was not possible in the time, and with the resources available, to make the argument self-evident. Ideally the objects shown should have been accompanied by labels pointing out the significance of the comparisons. As it was, everyone who visited the exhibition found a revelation of beauty and of terror, but did not stop to reflect on their co-existence in the realm of art. But there were many after-thoughts; here are mine.

* * *

Let me begin with a few historical commonplaces. The relations between primitive and modern art are as old as the Eiffel

Tower—exactly, for the Eiffel Tower was built to commemorate the Universal Exhibition of 1889, and at that exhibition there were numerous anthropological objects which attracted the attention of the artists of Paris, above all, of Gauguin. 'It is great,' said Gauguin. 'In the Java village there are Hindoo dances. All the art of India can be seen there, and it is exactly like the photos I have. I go there again on Thursday as I have an appointment with a mulatto girl.' Van Gogh wrote to Emile Bernard: 'There is something I am very sorry to have missed at the Exhibition, that is, the collection of dwellings of all the races. . . . So could you, since you have seen it, give me an impression of it, and especially a sketch with the colours of the primitive Egyptian dwelling. . . . In one of the illustrated papers I saw a sketch of ancient Mexican dwellings; they too seem to have been primitive and very beautiful. Oh, if only one knew about those times and could paint the people of those days who lived in such dwellings—that would be just as beautiful as Millet: I don't say as far as colour is concerned, but in character, as something significant, as something in which one has a solid faith.' (*Letters to Emile Bernard.* Edited and translated by Douglas Lord. London, 1938.)

This is eighteen years before Picasso painted 'Les Demoiselles d'Avignon', and note what Van Gogh is saying, and what Gauguin and Emile Bernard were thinking at this time—namely, that primitive art is beautiful, and that it is beautiful because it is primitive—that because it is primitive, it has something which is significant, something in which one can have a solid faith.

Until that time, and, indeed, till long after that time, anthropologists and ethnologists had been completely blind to the aesthetic appeal of the objects which they piled up in rich confusion in their museums. Their favourite epithet for the description of such objects, throughout the nineteenth century, is 'crude', and 'crude' I suspect they remain for most anthropologists, who are not accustomed to give any scientific status at all to aesthetic values. Frobenius, towards the end of the nineteenth century, was probably the first anthropologist to use the word 'art' (Kunst) in connection with primitive peoples, and even he did not lay much stress on it.[1] Robert Lowie, as late as 1925, is probably the first anthropologist to recognise, in his own words, that 'the aesthetic impulse is one of the irreducible components of the human mind . . . a potent agency from the very beginnings of human existence', though he quotes Jochelson, whose work is unknown to me, as having previously admitted this fact. But what I wish to emphasise is the fact that the whole of this revaluation of primitive art—its very recognition *as* art—was due to artists, and not to scholars and scientists, who, in spite of their more intimate knowledge of the material in question, remained obstinately purblind to its aesthetic qualities.

All this is matter of fact, and perhaps not very important. What is more interesting and debatable is the motive underlying the recognition of the aesthetic value of primitive art, sixty years ago. Why did the artists of 1889 find primitive art not merely beautiful, but also significant—'something in which one has a solid faith'? That, I take it, is the real problem.

I think there is little doubt that the answer to this question lies in the artist's revolt, conscious or unconscious, against the industrial civilisation which, by the third quarter of the nineteenth century, had become such a hideous reality. In the case of Van Gogh and Gauguin, that revolt was perfectly conscious, and openly formulated. For Gauguin European civilisation was a 'dismal swamp', corrupt beyond redemption. He deliberately turned his back on it, and went to Tahiti to seek the primitive reality. To a certain extent he found it, and this is how he describes it: 'A delight distilled from some indescribable sacred horror which I glimpse of far-off things. The odour of an antique joy which I am

[1] Frobenius, as a matter of fact, puts the whole question very neatly (*Kulturgeschichte Afrikas*, 1933, p. 41): 'I am a little worried by the idea that some collector or the art dealers will come forward with the request for an exact definition. I already have a presentiment of gents with solemn faces drawing out of their frock coats a photograph or perhaps even an object of some sort, a carved figure from Africa or Oceania, an embroidered cloth from China, a painted statue from Japan, and fiercely demanding: "Sir! Is this a work of art or is it not?" But for all such questions I have my answer ready and will let it be known now—it runs "To decide such a question is not my affair; in this matter you are the expert; my modest task is limited to gaining an understanding of the background from which, in the history of human culture, the arts emerge".'

breathing in the present. Animal shapes of a statuesque rigidity: indescribably antique, august, and religious in the rhythm of their gesture, in their singular immobility. In the dreaming eyes is the overcast surface of an unfathomable enigma.' (Letter to André Fontainas, March 1899.) In the case of Van Gogh the reaction was less conscious, more introverted, and the end was madness. From the asylum in St. Rémy he wrote of his *horror of life*, but he also wrote that he considered the artist's duty was to think, not to dream, and he said of Bernard and Gauguin's paintings: 'The thing about them is that they are a sort of dream or nightmare—that they are erudite enough—you can see that it is someone who is mad on the primitives', and that gave him 'a painful feeling of collapse instead of progress'. But his own concentration on the visual was an escape from the civilisation around him—as he said himself: 'It is really at bottom fairly true that a painter as man is too much absorbed by what his eyes see, and is not sufficiently master of the rest of his life.' (*Further Letters of Vincent van Gogh to his Brother*. London. Constable. 1929.)

* * *

Van Gogh died in this year, 1889, which I have given as the one in which the relations between primitive and modern art began, so he does not really come into question. But Van Gogh is the father of that modern movement known as Expressionism, and the Expressionists were to become, twenty years later, the most consistent representatives of a primitive style in modern art. By a primitive *style* I mean a mode of expression more or less directly influenced by primitive prototypes. Emil Nolde, like Gauguin before him, actually visited the South Seas, and there was the direct impact on other Expressionists, such as Schmidt-Rottluff, Pechstein and Kirchner, of Frobenius's publications, and of Carl Einstein's *Negerplastik*, published in Leipzig in 1915.

To return to France: I would like to suggest that there was no break in development between the discovery of primitive art in 1889 and its direct translation into Cubism from 1907 onwards. Gauguin went on painting until 1903, and his works, of course, gained in influence after his death. By 1904 we know that Vlaminck was taking an interest in primitive art, and Vlaminck infected Derain with his enthusiasm, and Derain infected Matisse. Both Matisse and Derain began to collect negro sculpture before 1907. Then came 'Les Demoiselles d'Avignon' and a series of paintings, by Picasso, Braque, Derain and others, which grew increasingly geometrical in style, and finally, in other hands, emerged as Cubism: Cubism analytical and synthetic, and then abstract and uncontaminated by any representational element.

Meanwhile, another development was taking place which was to have its repercussions on modern art. About the same time that Gauguin was discovering primitive art, Freud was discovering the unconscious. I have no documentary evidence of the first contact between art and psychoanalysis, but I suspect that it took place in Munich between 1908 and 1910. There is some research to be done on this question, but I think it would establish that both Kandinsky and Klee had some knowledge of psycho-analysis before 1910, and certainly the group of artists who assembled in Zürich on the outbreak of war in 1914 and established the Dada group were familiar with some of Freud's ideas. This group was presently taken up by a trained psychiatrist, André Breton, and from the interpenetration of primitive art, psycho-analysis, the poetry of Rimbaud and Lautréamont, post-Hegelian philosophy, and I know not what else, the movement known as Surrealism was born. The Surrealists from the beginning took a serious, and indeed a scientific, interest in all forms of primitive art, and in Paris at any rate there was a close understanding between the Surrealist artists, the psycho-analysts and the anthropologists. The general effect of this was to reveal a common basis, in the unconscious, for those irrational forms of art in which the contemporary, no less than the primitive, man felt impelled to express himself.

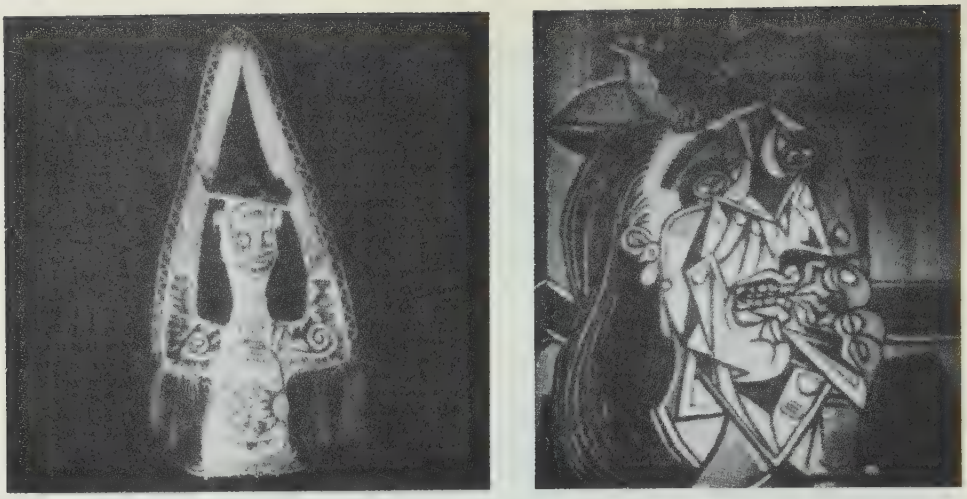
These historical considerations are perhaps

Gauguin's 'Te Rereioa'*: the fulfilment of a quest for primitive reality*

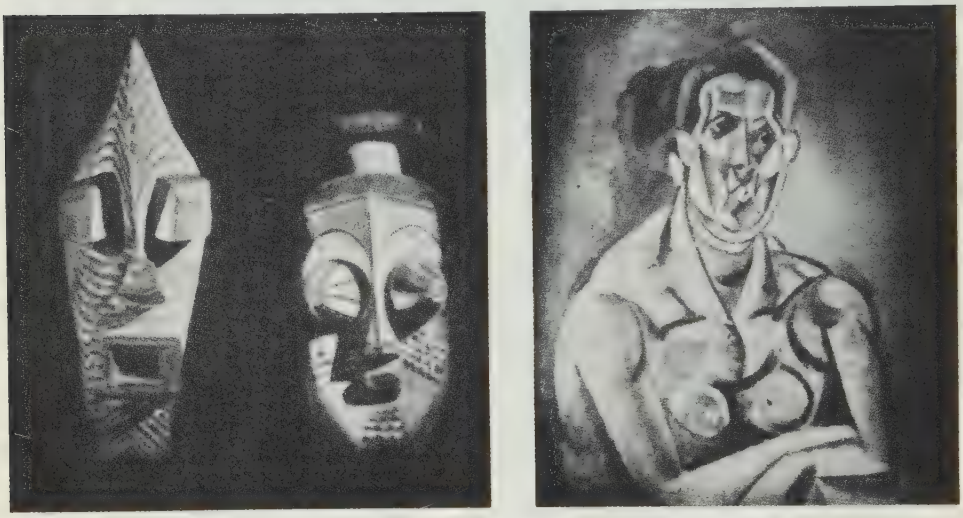
unduly pedantic, but the dimensions of the relations between modern art and primitive art are not fully appreciated. I hope I have shown that it has not been a superficial flirtation; that, on the contrary, there has grown up, over a period of sixty years, an intimate connection which, on the one hand, has led to a revaluation of ethnological material, a great portion of which has now been rescued from the scientific lumber-room and elevated to a worthy place among the creative achievements of mankind; and on the other hand has given to the modern artist a new mode of expression which he finds in accordance with his emotional or spiritual needs. And that brings me to my last point.

I have been criticised for using the word *Angst* in this context (in a brief Preface to the catalogue of the exhibition already mentioned), and for suggesting that the similarities which exist between certain types of primitive art and certain types of modern art are due to a common psychological condition. Perhaps I did not make my meaning clear, but it seems beyond doubt that the trend of modern art away from representational realism and towards some degree of abstraction or symbolism is but a reflection of those philosophical and religious trends which themselves, no doubt determined by, or at any rate intimately related to, economic trends, have led mankind into a state of religious unbelief, of psychological unbalance, and social unrest. If there is one word which succinctly defines the universal condition of mankind today, it is the word *insecurity*—mental insecurity, social insecurity, metaphysical insecurity.

Now I am not going to suggest that the same, or a similar, word can be used to characterise primitive man. This term is far too inclusive for our purposes, and we need some classification of primitive races before we can venture to generalise about their metaphysical characteristics. But there is the general division I have already referred to—that between primitive races whose art is naturalistic, and primitive races whose art is geometrical or symbolic. It is roughly, as I have said, the distinction between palæolithic art and neolithic art, between what is usually called bushman art and what is usually called Negro art. At this point I



Agony throughout the ages: a mask from the Papuan Gulf (left) and Picasso's 'Weeping Woman'



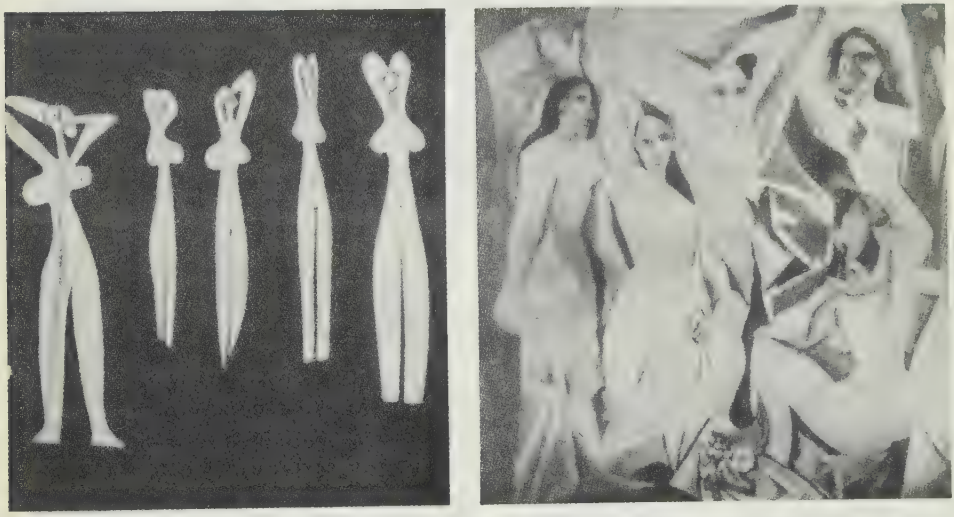
Similarity of geometrical design: two masks from the Central Congo and Picasso's 'Femme au Chignon'

would quite sincerely ask for the anthropologist's guidance, because it does seem to me that we lack any thorough correlation of types of religion and types of art. I am assuming, however, that such a correlation would reveal a parallel between religions of fear, terror, propitiation and retribution, to which would correspond arts of symbolic or geometric tendency; and between religions of ritual and sympathetic magic based on a belief in the beneficence of nature and the gods, to which would correspond a naturalistic or representational art.

If such a correspondence does, in fact, show itself throughout the history of mankind, then it is very easy to explain the return of the modern artist to forms of art similar to those we call 'primitive'. The reason lies in mankind's return to a 'primitive' state of mind. To call the state of mind of a contemporary existentialist 'primitive' is perhaps paradoxical; but when the existentialist (and we must remember that he represents the up-to-date Christian theologist as well as the up-to-date atheist philosopher)—when the existentialist begins

38 *Illustrations from the* GEORGE HOELLERING *film* 'Shapes and Forms No. 1. Primitive and Modern Art'

A primitive face from the South Congo and a modern head by the sculptor Brancusi



Are these cave drawings, or the work of the artist who painted the picture on the right?

to talk about the anguish or uneasiness which overcomes him when he faces up to the problem of man's cosmic predicament, he is merely using elaborate linguistic signs to describe the same feelings which overcome primitive men, but which they can only express in emotive symbols. Well, the modern artist, not being an adept in philosophical verbalisation, is reduced to expressing himself in concrete symbols—that is to say, in works of art that are the objective correlates of his inner emotional tensions. That is the central fact to be grasped in this debate—I mean the fact that modern man, and the modern artist in particular, is no mere eclectic monkey, trying to imitate for his occasional amusement the artifices of primitive races; on the contrary, he is, spiritually speaking, in a tough spot himself, and the more honest he is, the more resolutely he rejects the traditional shams and worn counters of expression, the more nearly, and the more unconsciously, he finds himself expressing himself in a manner which bears a real and no longer superficial resemblance to so-called 'primitive' art.

Profiles in

Fat pigs and good prices

SIR JAMES TURNER

Farmers' Guide

One morning, five years ago, the farmers of Britain thought they had been ignored, browbeaten and vilified long enough and decided to give themselves a press agent. They chose 'Jim' Turner. They could not have done better if they had chosen America's best high-pressure salesman.

In physique, he could be a business tycoon, or an Italian opera star or an impresario. He has a strong voice, a keen eye and a loud laugh which gurgles down a microphone and infects people. He wears dark suits, loud ties and rakish trilbies with a swashbuckling ease, smokes fat cigars and has the smoothest party manners outside the ranks of the younger Tories. He has moved so fast—he was knighted at the New Year—that even *Who's Who* has not kept up with him.

He hates statistics but can talk at length of good fat pigs with well-rounded flanks and the roast beef of old England; he knows that if he can keep people's mouths watering long enough without driving them crazy, he can deliver the goods. Of the Government's plan of a hundred million pounds' worth of agricultural produce by 1951, 'Jim' Turner says in effect: 'Chicken feed. The farmers will beat that target, and how . . .'

From his Bedford Square office, he has streamlined the once sleepy NFU and roped in another 37,000 members. He has got them good prices, security, and has told them they had duties, too.

For his work, he gets £5,000 a year, popularity and the knowledge (which he keeps to himself) that what he says goes at the Ministry of Agriculture. At his own 320-acre model farm at South Anston, sixteen miles from Sheffield, he puts his principles into practice.

Providing he succeeds in raising production, and there are signs that he will, 'Jim' Turner will undoubtedly lead Britain's farmers into a new land of milk and money. That would suit fifty million Britons down to a T-bone steak.

White snobbery and black reform

ARTHUR CREECH-JONES

Colonial Secretary

In 1891, Queen Victoria sat gracefully and firmly on the throne of England. The British Empire was the greatest Empire the world had ever seen; Britons wrote poems about it and fought to make it yet larger. It had few problems. In that year, Arthur Creech-Jones was born in a working-class home in Bristol. Since then, the Empire has become smaller, though no less vigorous. Now, people write White Papers about it and Creech-Jones is the man of the transition period. This month, the Colonial Exhibition, which he sponsors, is telling Britons something about the change.

A Civil Servant in London at the age of sixteen, a Trade Union official under Bevin in the 'thirties, one of the promoters of the Workers' Travel Association, Creech-Jones has filled the odd corners of his life with a great many pursuits. But nothing claimed him like colonial subjects. What political diarists used to call 'the Fabians' mystical knowledge of what goes on in farthest Malacca or Basutoland' came from mild Mr. Creech-Jones' busy mind. He was the fountainhead of colonial reform, and no fact was too small, too unimportant for him. He spoke largely in the wilderness.

When Creech-Jones became Colonial Secretary in October 1946, a breath of fresh air blew the cobwebs out of Whitehall corridors. The seventeenth Colonial Secretary since World War One, he was the best informed. He battled with snobbery and apathy, worked out new plans for East Africa, and especially the West Indies.

People still think too little of Creech-Jones; they are apt to remember easily coined phrases like 'poor little Creech-Jones'. He seems easy to manage and easy to convince. Plump, with a diffident smile and an air of nonchalant calm, the future will certainly show him as one of Labour's most outstanding successes.

Miniature

KIRSTEN FLAGSTAD

Opera Star

Covent Garden and Bayreuth

SHE is the greatest operatic soprano in the world. She knows it. She gets £500 for a single concert. She deserves it. The name of Kirsten Malfred Flagstad is one that fills a concert hall or an opera house anywhere in the world. She accepts the fact placidly, knits and plays solitaire in her dressing room, says smoothly that a singer should be nervous 'only if she has a cold or laryngitis.'

An unfortunate taste in stage costume makes her loom larger than she really is. Off-stage, unhindered by flowing white draperies, she is a handsome, blue-eyed blonde, dignified but easily unbending. Her 53 years have left little mark on her face.

Her prodigious stamina (which helps make the strenuous rôles of Isolda and Brunhilda her favourites) was not evident in her youth: overwork prevented her from becoming a doctor as planned by her mother, called 'the musical mamma of Norway', because she trained so many professional singers. Kirsten Flagstad thrived in the musical atmosphere of her home (her father was a conductor and the three other children all took to musical careers). She made an outstanding reputation in Norway and seemed content with it. Only the pressure of her second husband (a wartime quisling whose activities later nearly ruined her) sent her to Bayreuth in 1933 and thence to the Metropolitan and eventually to London.

She took both cities by storm. She did so again after the war and her husband's death. Now, she is again the star of Covent Garden's Wagner season. Her voice is like Niagara. The pity is that it cannot flow for as long.

Heard in rehearsal at the Metropolitan opera in late 1934, it caused a sensation; her partner missed his cue; the conductor, Arthur Bodanzky, misled by the results of an audition in a small, heavily-carpeted room in St. Moritz, laid down his baton in surprise. It has been a sensation ever since.

COUNT CARLO SFORZA

Italian Statesman

A clean sweep and a monocle

ONE of Europe's most promising rising politicians today is a man who has been in politics for forty years. Carlo Sforza, Italy's Foreign Minister, has, at the age of seventy-five, carved a second career for himself. He has brought Italy into the Western partnership and buried the hatchet with France by signing the customs union.

He is the seventeenth Count Sforza. His ancestors—brilliant, often Machiavellian self-made men—ruled Milan and one of them, Ludovico, was Leonardo da Vinci's patron. From them, Sforza gets his deeply cultured European outlook. From the post-Risorgimento generation, he gets his liberalism, his belief in orderly progress.

After being Foreign Minister at Versailles, Sforza was Ambassador in Paris when Mussolini 'marched' on Rome in 1922. He resigned and was soon forced to emigrate. 'The only thing I want,' he said, 'is freedom and it is the only thing that fellow cannot give me.' In France, Belgium, Britain and America, Sforza toiled to make a meagre living, occasionally letting out a Churchillian volley at his enemy whom he called 'a demagogue, a charlatan, a cheap egocentric and a puppet of Hitler'.

When Italy contemplated war with Britain in 1940, Sforza wrote to King Emmanuel: 'Not only will Britain resist but with her Dominions she will astound the world by her tenacity.' The little king did not listen and when Sforza returned to Italy, he promptly became a Republican. He never again wore the Collar of the Annunziata.

Dapper, suave, Count Sforza has never lost his native enthusiasm. Speaking of Italy's renaissance, he will emphasise his point with a clean sweep of a well-manicured hand and a drop of his monocle. Perhaps a little remote from current social problems, he is, nevertheless, a symbol of what Italy has meant, and may mean, in the European community.

Planning the

THE ILLUSTRATIONS ARE FROM THE PLAN FOR

An aeroplane view of the Town Centre, from the north, which is built up between woods from a valley, in which is the river and railway, to the top of a hill overlooking the town. Industry and the lines of communication are at top of photograph; the rest of the town is contained within a semi-circle below (see diagrams)

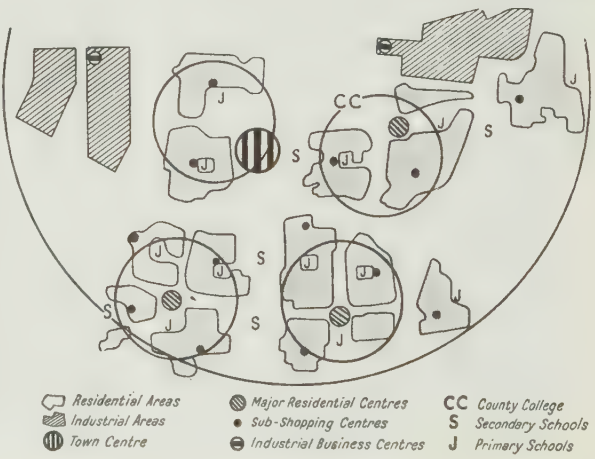
THE extraordinary project of building a dozen new towns of up to 60,000 inhabitants each within the next fifteen or twenty years has, quite characteristically, aroused neither astonishment, pride nor enthusiasm in the average Briton. If he refers to them at all, it is only to grumble because they are not going ahead faster. Yet in a few years' time, people will be coming from all over the world to look at them—in fact, they've started already.

They mark an abrupt departure from the century-long policy of throwing up vast, featureless suburbs and housing estates of nearly identical buildings, without cinemas, hospitals or shops, without parks or public buildings, frequently without a church and sometimes even without a pub. Not that to build a new town from scratch is a unique feat in itself. Berwick-on-Tweed, begun in 1296, and Wilchelsea, begun in 1280,

THE PLANNING

HOUSING

Residential areas are arranged in compact groups on the high ground. Natural features such as woods and valleys act as barriers between them. The groups are clustered round three major centres, which can, therefore, be large in scale. These, in turn, cluster round the central area itself. Each area has its own junior school and sub-centre contained in it. The photograph of the model on the right shows the four residential areas in the south-west, grouped round their centre. The shapes of the areas are determined by the existing topography, the field patterns, trees, valleys and existing buildings being worked into the design so that each has its own character



GORDON RATTRAY TAYLOR

New Towns

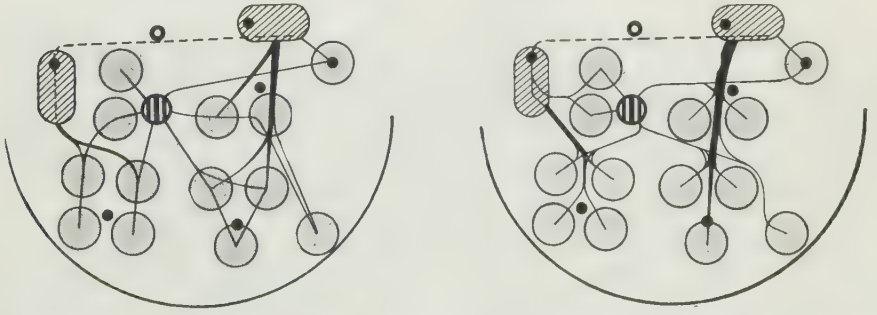
HARLOW NEW TOWN BY FREDERIC GIBBERD

started the new town conception; more recently Ebenezer Howard, half a century ahead of his time, inspired Letchworth (1904) and Welwyn (1920), while the previous century saw industrially sponsored towns at Bournville and Port Sunlight. To build a dozen simultaneously is more remarkable, but the really unusual feature is the attempt which is being made to create, not merely so many buildings and roads, but vigorous and effective social units. When Haussmann laid out Paris and Wren made his plan for London, they were concerned only to produce a spacious and architecturally impressive design. Today, planners remember the Greek dictum, 'Towns are people', and are seeking to create for them a balanced population in a way never, I think, attempted before. In addition, the attempt is being made to create towns which will be convenient and healthy as well as beautiful, towns which will incorporate every practical idea which can contribute to an agreeable existence—in short, towns which we can leave to future generations without feeling ashamed. You might imagine, then, that everyone in England would be discussing the various plans while they are still in a comparatively fluid state, pressing for a nobler treatment of the town centre here, approving the fine system of parks there, or debating the proportion of houses to flats in a third. Instead, discussion has been confined chiefly to those already dwelling in the selected areas; and they have—naturally enough—been chiefly concerned at the disturbance of existing building and have paid little heed to the wider issues.

For instance, at Hemel Hempstead, G. A. Jellicoe, who made the original plan, proposed to dam the stream, creating a lake and water garden, with shops along one side, overlooking the lake, rather as do the shops in Princes Street, Edinburgh—often called the finest shopping street in the world. This was probably the most imaginative of all the New Town plans, but it involved the destruction of a certain amount of existing commercial property. Local property owners raised strong opposition, and the plan is being drastically modified. It is at least possible that a more impartial public opinion might have insisted on the bolder scheme.

PROCESS AT WORK

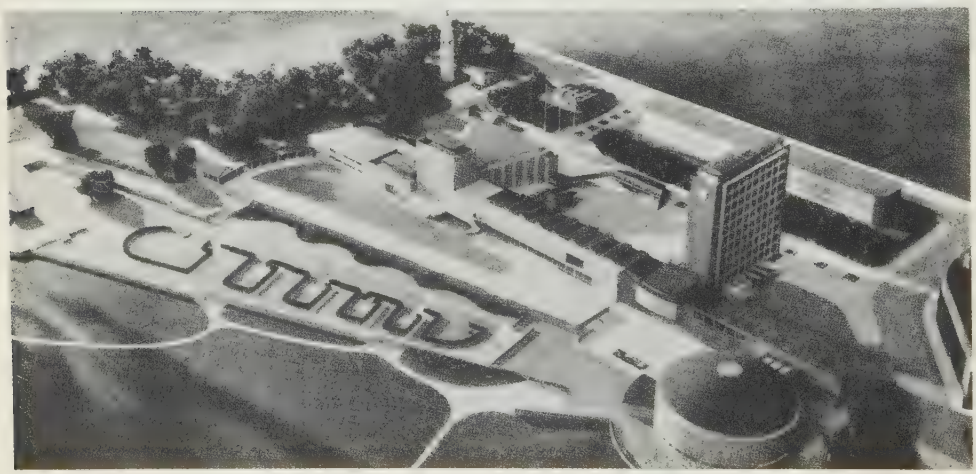
INTERNAL CIRCULATION



An independent system of minor roads and of cycle tracks and footways runs through the residential areas giving connections between their centre. There are two methods of circulation. For fast traffic, left, *the roads pass between the residential areas so that there is an uninterrupted traffic flow and no disturbance to buildings. For slow traffic,* right, *the roads run through the centres of the areas connecting them together*

(Above) The Town Centre. On the left is the town park with sports stadium, cricket and football pitches. Top centre is the main town centre. Bottom foreground is the station yard and warehouses; car parks are disposed throughout the centre

(Below) The Civic Centre. The tall tower is the municipal offices, the circular building is the concert hall; on the left is the art gallery and museum, extending into the town theatre



MASTER PLAN

But before outlining some of the planning issues on which public opinion might still speak, I had better answer the questions what, where and why? Seven areas have so far been designated for new towns around London: Stevenage, Crawley, Hemel Hempstead, Harlow, Hatfield–Welwyn, Bracknell (near Reading) and Basildon in Essex. Building has started, or is just about to start, at the first four, but the last two are still subject to public debate. There are also two more in the north of England: Peterlee, near Durham, and Aycliffe, near Darlington, with a possible third at Congleton near Manchester, and two in Scotland: East Kilbride, near Glasgow, and Glenrothes in Fife.

The purpose of those round London is to absorb some 300,000 people from the Metropolitan area, as part of the Abercrombie plan for reducing the population of London by 1,000,000. (Unfortunately the drift of population to London is continuing with such speed that it looks as if the population will be just as big as ever when the plan has been executed.) But the purpose of Peterlee is not decentralisation but centralisation: it is to bring together the population of a hundred scattered mining villages. Aycliffe is to serve a trading estate which has grown out of a wartime filling factory, and Glenrothes will be the mining town of the new east coast coalfields. Thus these towns are not primarily part of the attempt to relieve the housing shortage; but because of this shortage, they are under constant pressure to build as many houses as possible and leave the amenities until later. In the retrospect of history, when their mistakes have become plain, it will probably be complained that the planners should have thought longer and worked slower, rather than faster.

Some of the principles upon which they are working are established firmly enough, to be sure. It is held, for instance, that town should be town, and country, country. So the new towns will not be allowed to grow indefinitely. When they reach their planned limit, they will stop; all the land around for ten miles or so will be permanently preserved from building development. Furthermore, the towns will be broken up by green wedges, or campuses, gardens and parks. Another unimpeachable principle is that people should not have to travel long distances to work, so each town will contain enough industrial undertakings to provide work for all the inhabitants. And, as a rule, industry will be grouped together in a separate section from the housing, so that the latter shall be free of noise and fumes and shall preserve its residential character.

The New Towns intend, of course, to provide schools, playing fields and educational facilities on a generous scale, to say nothing of shops, restaurants, cinemas, libraries and many other amenities. But they will do more than merely provide these facilities: they are trying to group them effectively. It has been made a working rule that everyone should be within quarter of a mile of shops; similarly no home should be more than quarter of a mile from a nursery school nor half a mile from a junior school. This has led to the idea of the so-called neighbourhood unit, a more or less self-contained suburb providing accommodation for between 5,000 and 10,000 people, together with all essential shops, churches, junior schools and so on. Typical of the advantages which it is hoped will flow from this idea is that parents will find it easy to establish contact with teachers at junior schools and compare notes about the progress of their children. The larger towns will comprise six or eight such units, together with a 'town centre' where will be located larger and more specialised shops, civic buildings, library and entertainment facilities. Neighbourhood units will be separated by green parkways, in which will lie secondary schools and playing fields, and through which main roads will run.

What is chiefly questionable in this conception is the size: some of these units will be larger than towns like Henley-on-Thames and only a little smaller than Evesham. It seems quite possible that some of the Development Corporations may find themselves with a group of townlets on their

hands instead of a single big town. No one seems to know how this figure was arrived at: it is certainly not based on sociological research. Indeed, such evidence as there is suggests that something much smaller—about 2,000 people—forms a natural social unit. The same might be said about the figure of 60,000 people which the Reith Committee (which included not a single scientist) recommended for the towns themselves.

Some people, hearing that the New Towns are all to be based upon the same principles, fear that they may be too much alike. I do not think there is great danger of this, as far as the physical appearance goes, for the master plan for each town has been prepared by a different architect or town-planning consultant, and every plan is greatly influenced by natural features of the site. Hemel Hempstead, for instance, is situated in a deep and draughty valley and already contains 20,000 people, whereas Harlow holds but 2,700 and lies on fairly level ground. Peterlee and Glenrothes will be influenced by their predominantly mining inhabitants. Crawley is cut up by railways and main roads, but Anthony Minoprio has grouped his educational buildings in campuses serving two or three neighbourhood units and no doubt hopes to weld them together by this means. Again, it must not be supposed that the master plan is a rigid thing. If, when the first neighbourhood has been built, it turns out that there should have been more allotments or fewer flats, or if people feel they would prefer to live closer together or nearer the shops, then plans for subsequent units will be modified accordingly. (To start with, incidentally, most of the towns are proposing to provide about twenty per cent of the accommodation in the form of flats, for they believe that, when people see the finished article, many of those who now say they want houses will change their minds.)

POPULATION BALANCE

Physical planning of this kind is comparatively easy. It involves a great deal of finicking adjustment, but the objectives are clear. Much trickier is the New Towns' aim to have a 'balanced population'. Having seen the dreary monotony of building estates comprising rows of identical houses and hence attracting people from within a narrow income range, it is natural to demand that the New Towns should contain much the same variety of people as the population as a whole: rich, medium and poor, professional workers, clerks, artisans and manual labourers, old people as well as young, married couples as well as bachelors and spinsters, writers and artists no less than scientists and theologians. This means, to begin with, that a variety of houses must be provided, and in point of fact not only will the Corporations themselves build both subsidised and non-subsidised houses, but they will also let unbuilt sites to people who prefer to build their own home, retaining only the right to approve the plans.

But while it is easy to propose population balance as an ideal, there are enormous difficulties in the way of realising it. For instance, since these towns are going to try and provide jobs for their inhabitants, they must exercise careful control over the factories which they allow to set up there. If they find a disproportionate demand for low-paid labour, they will have to attract firms employing specialists and technicians. If they find they are getting a disproportionate demand for female labour, they will have to encourage industries which employ a large proportion of men. Most of the New Towns are trying to induce research laboratories, Government Departments and so forth to settle there, so as to restore the balance. But the real difficulty is that this balance must be maintained in a town which is growing rapidly over a period of twenty years, and it must be maintained from the start, for once a town gets known as a 'one-class' town, people of other classes will hesitate to settle there. But when the population is still small, the arrival of a single large firm will destroy the balance: indeed, the first thing each town needs is a couple of thousand building-trades operatives.

Right away, their first housing development becomes a one-class area—and, when building is completed, it is likely to be a depressed area too.

CLASS STRUCTURE

While the ideal of a diversified social structure is clearly sound, what is much more arguable is the general determination of the towns to 'mix these groups up'. Some towns are building large, medium and small houses cheek-by-jowl, in the naïve hope that this will somehow bring their occupants into friendly contact. It is more likely to have the effect of ensuring that neighbours scarcely speak to one another—and in the end the richer people will abandon the large house, which will have to be divided into flats. The only thing which brings people together is common interests, and it is as natural for, say, doctors to make their friends among professional men as it is for manual labourers to prefer one another's company to that of doctors. Far better to use the technique reportedly tried in America during the war, when people moving to a new housing development were jumbled up for a week or two and then allowed to choose their own neighbours.

That such groups do not want to mix is shown clearly enough by the survey conducted in Willesden in 1947 by Bertram Hutchinson. People who had lived in one-class streets, and also in streets where the classes were mixed, were asked which they preferred: sixty-two per cent preferred single-class streets, against thirty per cent who voted for mixed. Analysis by economic status showed that both rich and poor felt equally strongly about this. The trouble is that a purely political concept of class is introduced into what ought to be a purely sociological calculation. Where the sociologist recognises only a variety of groupings, with varying traditions of behaviour, the politician introduces comparative judgments of 'higher' and 'lower' and then sets out to mix up these groups: one might as well try to mix up football fans and ballet fans. Furthermore, this proposal runs counter to another objective of the planners—to produce a vigorous and friendly community spirit in the towns.

Here the planners' ideas are exceptionally vague and unreal. For instance, they appear to believe that the construction of a central building containing a library, canteen, clubrooms and possibly an amateur stage, will foster community spirit. This is then christened a 'community centre'—a delightful example of belief in the magic power of words, quite comparable with the equally wishful term 'neighbourhood unit'. In reality, the cohesion of a town depends upon a million personal links, based upon shared experiences, often backed by ties of kinship and always by common interests: such links are forged far more often upon domestic occasions, in parlours and on picnics, than in libraries, swimming pools or dramatic clubs. An empty sociability is often the enemy of lasting cohesion. The solidarity of these towns (as of all towns) will depend much more upon such things as the ease with which people can 'drop over after supper and see how the So-and-so's baby is getting on'—a thing which is as much a matter of geographical barriers as of social ones. In the Max Lock study of Middlesbrough, it was observed that neighbourly feeling was much stronger in the crowded slums than in the low-density housing estates. If contiguity makes for neighbourliness, the Reith Committee's postulate of a maximum overall density of fifteen persons to the acre is far too low. The present blind demand for low densities represents a reaction from the crowding and lack of open space in the Metropolis: but in a small country town where the countryside is always within a few minutes' bus-ride, such a lavish provision of open spaces is unnecessary. (It also means longer journeys to school and to shops.)

It is also probable that the practice of building long lines of terraced houses back-to-back militates against cohesion. The late Professor Reilly's proposal that up to sixty houses should be grouped round a 'village green' would tend to create natural social groupings—and it is out of such small groupings that cohesion is built, as the body

is built out of cells. Some of the New Towns are trying this idea in a rather tentative way, and Stevenage has got an ingenious plan of 'village greens inside out' in which houses back on to a common garden, reached through their individual back garden. The size of neighbourhood units is also relevant to cohesion, and it is interesting that Aycliffe, after careful study, has decided to create wards of about 2,000 people, subdivided into smaller precincts.

The real trouble is lack of research and experiment. We know nothing about the network of personal linkages within a town (though this has been studied in the United States), and how it is affected by different layouts and considerations of class. We do not even know the most socially satisfactory way to design a house. (Should mother be shut away to cook in a glazed cell or should the kitchen be the centre of family life, as in the farmhouse? Would a silence-room for reading and homework yield more happiness than a spare bedroom?) But above all, we know almost nothing about the sort of life which makes for happiness. Little attempt is being made to fill these gaps. The Ministry of Town and Country Planning has recently started a small sociological research section, as an afterthought, but it appears to regard the sociological contribution as so much icing on the cake, instead of treating it as the foundation of the whole business of planning.

THE 'NUMINOUS'

But however carefully assorted the population, however elaborate the amenities, however beautiful the architecture, the New Towns can still remain spiritually dead, sunk in the cloying paternalism which has enervated so many previous experiments. It is not enough to aim at producing something like the stolid, self-satisfied atmosphere of the eighteenth-century town; we should set our sights at the furthest mark, and aim for the vigorous intellectual life, the fervent curiosity, the profound aesthetic conscience of an Athens. And of such a target the New Towns have, I fear, no inklings.

Three things might, I think, contribute to such a development. First, the New Town populations must be responsible for their own growth. They must be run democratically—and that means more democratically than any town in England is run today. In practice, it seems that they may be less democratic than an ordinary town, for the Corporations are thinking in well-meaning but wholly paternalist terms. They are out to 'do good' and, having done it, propose to retire from the scene. The planning teams do not feel themselves to be part of the population of their New Town: they do not speak of 'we' but of 'they'. They are *dei ex machina*, and it is very harmful to the soul to be a god for long.

If we ask ourselves where in Britain we have approached nearest to the Athenian ideal, perhaps the answer is, in the colleges of the older universities. Here one is conscious of being part of a long and lofty cultural tradition, transcending the small immediacies of existence. It is arguable, therefore, that the New Towns should attempt to reproduce the precinctual atmosphere of the universities, rather than the commercial *bonhomie* of the industrial centre. However, atmosphere is generated primarily by people. If the universities have achieved a special atmosphere, it is because they have attracted a particular type of person—one, in fact, devoted to non-material values and ends—and these people have, to a considerable extent, succeeded in imposing this scheme of values and of behaviour upon the community as a whole. Much will depend, then, upon how far the New Towns set out to attract such persons and place them in positions of prestige from which they can influence the community. Especially will this be so in the earliest days, for as the twig is bent, so the bough grows. (The possibility of locating a new university in one of these towns does not seem, however, to have been considered.)

Finally, it is questionable how far any town can achieve a sense of what Professor Otto called 'the numinous'—the spiritual quality in life—without a faith, or at least some organised system of belief in the meaning and purpose of human existence.

The Death of PUSHKIN

An eye witness's account by

W. A. CHUKOVSKY

To Pushkin's Father.

15th February, 1837.

By now, no doubt, you will have overcome the first moments of this terrible grief so that you can listen to me while I describe everything that passed during the last moments of your son: what I myself saw and what other eye-witnesses have reported to me.

At six o'clock in the afternoon, Pushkin had been brought home in a desperate condition. He was taken to his room where he asked for linen, undressed himself and lay down on the divan. His wife, ignorant of what had happened, wanted to enter, but he shouted loudly: *N'entrez pas, il y a du monde chez moi.* He feared that she might be frightened and she only entered after he was lying undressed on the sofa. Doctors were sent for. Arendt was not to be found, but Scholz and Sadler came.

'Things are going badly with me,' Pushkin said, giving Scholz his hand. He was examined, and Sadler left to fetch some instruments. When Pushkin was alone with Scholz, he asked him: 'What do you think of my condition? Tell me quite frankly.'—'I cannot keep it from you that your life is in danger.'—'Tell me rather that I am dying.'—'I consider it my duty not even to keep that from you, but first let us have the opinion of Arendt and Salomon.'—*Je vous remercie, vouz avez agi un honnête homme envers moi,* said Pushkin after some silence. Then: *Il faut que j'arrange ma maison.* 'Do you not wish to see someone close to you?' Scholz asked. 'Good-bye, friends,' said Pushkin, his eyes directed on his library. From whom he was taking his farewell, the living or the dead, I do not know. A little later he asked: 'Do you think I have no more than an hour to live?'—'Oh, no! I only thought it would be more pleasant for you to see some of your dear ones. Pletnev is here.'—'Yes, and I would also like to see Chukovsky. Give me water—I feel sick.'

Meanwhile Sadler and Salomon had arrived, and soon afterwards Arendt came. At the first glance Arendt was certain there was no hope. They began applying ice-compresses to his body and gave him a refreshing drink which calmed him. Before Arendt left, Pushkin said to him: 'Please ask the Tsar to forgive me.' Arendt then entrusted him to Spassky, Pushkin's house-doctor. Spassky tried to calm him but Pushkin only waved him away. All his thoughts seemed to turn towards his wife. 'Don't give her too much hope,' he said to Spassky. 'Don't keep secret from her what is happening. I know her well. Do with me what you will.'

Princess Vyasemsky was now with Pushkin's wife, who was in an indescribable state. Like a ghost, she would creep into the

Pushkin was born 150 years ago this month. This account of his death is, we believe, published here for the first time in English.—*Eds.*, WORLD REVIEW

room where her dying husband lay. He could not see her (he lay facing the wall), but each time she entered, he would feel her presence. 'Is my wife here?' he would then say, 'Take her away!' He did not want her to see his suffering, which he bore with astonishing fortitude.

Indeed, up to his death he maintained a remarkable calm (only for two or three hours during the first night did the pain surpass all human endurance). 'I have been in thirty battles,' Arendt said later, 'I have seen many people die, but seldom thus.' Especially remarkable seemed to me the fact that Pushkin changed completely in these last hours. The storm which only a few hours ago had stirred his soul with irresistible power had now subsided. Another moving feature is that the previous day Gretsch had sent him an invitation to the funeral of his son; he remembered this in the midst of all his suffering.

At midnight Arendt returned, after he had received the Tsar's command that he should go immediately to Pushkin, read him the Tsar's letter and report back to His Majesty forthwith. 'I shall wait up,' was the Tsar's message to Arendt who was ordered to bring the letter back with him. But what was in the letter?

'If God should not permit us to see each other again, I send you herewith my pardon and advise you at the same time to carry out your Christian duty. As for your wife and your children, do not be anxious about them. I shall take care of them.' The dying man immediately fulfilled the Tsar's wish which he had already anticipated. He confessed, and, deeply moved, took the last sacrament. After Arendt had read him the letter, he had kissed it and for a long time he would not relinquish it. Several times Pushkin repeated: 'Give me the letter. I want to die with it. The letter! Where is the letter?' Arendt quietened him by promising to ask the Tsar for permission to retain it.

Until five o'clock in the morning his condition was unchanged. About that time, the pain in his abdomen became intolerable. He began to groan. Arendt was again sent for. He ordered an enema, but the pain increased and finally reached its highest intensity, continuing until seven in the morning.

If his poor wife had heard his moans during those two endless hours, her mind would not have withstood the torture. But she lay completely exhausted in the next room. At the first terrible outcry Princess Vyasemsky had rushed to her, but she was sleeping and only awoke when Pushkin's last moans subsided.

Spassky and Arendt said that particularly during the most terrible pain Pushkin showed the whole strength of his soul. He could have screamed, but he feared his wife might hear and get frightened. Towards seven in the morning the pain subsided, but all this time and until his death, Pushkin was fully conscious.

When his unbearable pain had subsided, he asked for his wife. Those minutes of farewell I shall not describe to you. Then he called for his children. They were awakened and brought to him half asleep. He looked silently at each one of them, put his hand on their heads, made the sign of the cross and then motioned them outside.

He was then told that Vyasemsky and I were present. 'Call them in,' he said faintly. I entered and kissed his cold hand. I could not say a word. He signed me out, but a moment later I returned and asked if I could give a message to the Tsar. 'Tell him,' he answered, 'I am sorry to die. I would have lived only for him.' Then he repeated the same in a whisper. 'Tell him,' he added, 'I wish him a long reign and I hope he will have pleasure in his son and in his Russia.' This he spoke softly, hesitatingly, but distinctly. Then he took leave of Vyasemsky. Pushkin was evidently hurrying to make his last dispositions on earth, as if he were growing conscious of approaching death. He felt his pulse and said: 'It is near death.'

Then Arendt returned. 'I am waiting for the Tsar's word that I may die in peace,' said Pushkin. I thereupon went at once to the Tsar who had, in fact, already sent for me. When I arrived before the Tsar, I recounted

Pushkin's words. 'Tell him,' the Tsar answered, 'I congratulate him upon having fulfilled his Christian duty and say that he is not to worry about his wife and children. They are henceforth mine. I entrust you to seal his papers immediately he is dead, and you, yourself, will go through them later.'

In the meantime Pushkin had been given opium which calmed him. The doctors now began to apply soothing dressings. This was so agreeable that he began to obey their instructions which, hitherto, he had defied because, frightened by suffering, he had wished for death. He himself applied the compresses and assisted his attendants. He seemed much better. When Dahl entered at two o'clock, Pushkin said to him, smiling: 'Things are going badly with me, brother!' Dahl had more hope than the others and replied: 'We are all hopeful, you should not despair.' 'No,' answered the dying man, 'it is not given to me to live any longer; I am dying. Evidently it is necessary thus.' Then a slight fever developed. Leeches were applied. His pulse slowed and weakened.

When Pushkin observed that Dahl had hope, he took his hand and said: 'Dahl, tell me the truth. Will I die soon?'—'We have hope, Pushkin, we really still hope.'—'Well, I thank you,' he answered. But evidently he only shared that hope for a moment. Almost the whole night (of the 28th and 29th) he had held Dahl's hand. Often he took a spoonful of water or a piece of ice in his mouth, or would rub his temples with the ice and apply the compresses himself. Apparently the pains troubled him less than did limitless grief. 'Oh, what grief eats away my heart!' he would exclaim and bring his hands up to his head. Then he would ask to be moved in bed, but usually before that was finished, he would call a halt.

Once he asked Dahl: 'Who is with my wife?'—'Many people sympathise with you. The hall and ante-chamber are filled from morning to evening with them.'—'Thank you,' said Pushkin, 'but go and tell my wife that, thank God, I am better now, otherwise in the end they will tell her all manner of things.' In fact, from the morning of the 28th, when the rumour had spread that Pushkin was dying, his house had been full of visitors. A moving feeling of general national mourning thus came to expression. The Tsar received news through Arendt, and the Grand Duchess, who had a great liking for Pushkin, sent me a number of notes which I answered with detailed accounts of his progress.

Later Pushkin asked the time and, when told, he continued hesitantly: 'Must I still suffer so long? . . . please hurry!' Several times he repeated: 'Is the end near?' always adding: 'Please hurry!' On the whole, however, he was remarkably patient. When grief and pain threatened to overwhelm him, he just moved his hands about and groaned a few times, but very quietly. 'Don't be ashamed of your pain,' said Dahl, 'just moan if it helps you.' 'No,' he said hesitatingly, 'I must not . . . moan . . . my wife might hear it . . . It is really ridiculous . . . that such . . . nonsense . . . could overwhelm me . . . I will not.'

I left him at five in the morning for two hours. As the night had passed fairly quietly, I was almost hopeful. But when I returned, I found the situation changed. Arendt was convinced that the patient would not outlive the day. He lay with eyes closed, only occasionally raising his hands to take some ice for his forehead. The clock struck two, and Pushkin had only another three-quarters of an hour to live. He opened his eyes and asked that his wife should give him some bilberries. She came in, sank to her knees and gave him two spoonfuls. Then she pressed her face against his. Pushkin stroked her head and said: 'Now, now, this means nothing. Thank God all is well. Now go!' His quiet expression and firm voice deceived her. She went out radiant. 'You will see,' she said, 'he will not die.' But the last moments of his life had just then begun.

His thoughts remained quite clear. Only occasionally something like a half sleep overcame him. Once he pressed Dahl's hand and murmured: 'Now lift me up, forward, yet higher, higher . . . Now, let us go!' But he

(*Continued on page 79*)

ALDOUS HUXLEY

THE MAN AND HIS WORK

GEORGE WOODCOCK

In the fashionable art of criticism by formulæ, it would be easy to dismiss Aldous Huxley in half-a-dozen bright or didactic phrases, all containing their grains of half-truth. He is, the Marxist might say, an example of the despair of the petty bourgeois faced by the inevitable contradictions of a social order he cannot abandon. For long, according to Christian writers, he has been a showpiece of the barren nihilism which arises from accepting a negative and impersonal mysticism instead of a dynamic religious attitude. His works are robbed of personality by a kind of sentimental misanthropy which makes him turn his characters into types and locks him away from whole kingdoms of emotional life. Out of all these and similar contentions, a case could very reasonably be made that Huxley's career as a novelist has shown a steady downward curve of quality since the high points of *Antic Hay* and *Point Counter Point*, until, observing his recent work in relation to the promise of his early years, it might even be said that, as an artist, he has been a particularly disappointing failure.

This case I have made elsewhere, and I still believe it to be true. But I also recognise that Huxley is much more than a novelist, and that the last decade of his life has been devoted primarily not to literary work, but to the search for ethical and religious truth. It is, to my mind, this increased emphasis on moral problems which has contributed to destroying the formal qualities of his novels. The novel is, after all, concerned primarily with persons, and whenever a novelist allows ideas to dominate him to the detriment of personalities, he ceases to be successful in this field. It is, of course, possible to utilise ideas in a good novel; Tolstoy did this in *War and Peace*, Silone in our own day in *The Seed Beneath the Snow*, and Forster in *A Passage to India*. But in all these cases the idea has been integrated with the formal construction and organic cultivation of character. Even Tolstoy, when he allowed an idea to carry him away, as in *Resurrection*, could produce a mediocre work.

But fictional writing is not restricted to novels. There is a whole class of romance, allegory and prose satire which is the domain of ideas, and in which people are quite legitimately used, not as personalities in the proper sense, but as media for expressing arguments. The early scientific romances of Wells, the allegorical fiction of Kafka, the prose satire of Swift, are all successful examples of this type of fiction in which the action of the characters represents the play of ideas in the author's mind.

Huxley's recent development, I would suggest, is that of a man possessed by certain ideas, who, having tried unsuccessfully to

express them through the inappropriate vehicle of the novel, has at last begun to turn his attention to the proper realm of parable and satire.

In the earliest of Huxley's writings I have been able to trace—a number of immature poems written when he was an undergraduate—there appears already that misanthropic horror at human imperfection which has always hampered his development as a novelist, despite the brilliant fictional talent he showed from the beginning. Linked to misanthropy was its usual companion, the moralistic desire to improve men, by holding up the grim mirror which shows them as even worse than they are in reality.

Huxley began as a philosophical hedonist, but even in these early days, when he wrote his volume of essays under the self-consciously Rabelaisian title, *Do What You Will*, he already showed himself a moralist by trying rather clumsily to build up what he called 'a new religion of life' by means of the combination of odd elements from all the world religions and philosophical systems of the past.

In his first novel, *Crome Yellow*, the play of ideas had already begun. Significantly, this youthful book was modelled on the odd little chamber plays which Thomas Love Peacock tried to pass off as novels, and which were almost all idea and contained almost no real characterisation. The Peacockian influence appeared in *Crome Yellow* in the long passages of knowledgeable and stimulating conversation and the strongly typified nature of the characters; it has persisted in Huxley's works right down to the present day, not only in construction and style, but even in a number of important themes, such as the re-introduction of Peacock's famous ape, Sir Oran Haut-ton, in differing forms into two of his three most recent books.

But *Crome Yellow* did contain real people, and real personal situations; it was a promising first novel, and the promise was sustained, through *Antic Hay* and *Those Barren Leaves*, to *Point Counter Point*. In these books the play of ideas and personalities is well-balanced, and the underlying satire on a decadent and sinful humanity does not destroy the autonomous life of the characters.

But in *Point Counter Point* the instability of this combination was already becoming evident. In Rampion, a fictionalised D. H. Lawrence, the moral element began to take its head, and Huxley, departing from the hedonistic scepticism of his early days, commenced his search after the Kingdom of God.

Henceforward, the didactic element began to predominate, and, as he went through *Brave New World* and *Eyeless in Gaza* to *After Many a Summer*, it had become clear that form and characterisation were sinking even more heavily under the insistent burden of ideas. The result was an awkward hybrid between the novel and the sermon. The characters were withered into types, and yet their gauche marionette dances still held the centre of the stage, while the central idea in the author's mind was shown, not in the action, which was a kind of chorus by deed, but in the voice of one central and saintly character, Mr. Propter in *After Many a Summer*, Bruno in *Time Must Have a Stop*, who represented the philosophy to which Huxley aspired at this time.

The message of such a novel as *After Many a Summer* is valuable enough in its own way, and contains its important warnings of the dangers of mass civilisations and monster states, and of the need for decentralisation and personal, instead of collective, fulfilment. But the conflicting demands of the two fictional elements in both this novel and *Time Must Have a Stop* made the exposition of ideas as unconvincing as the characters and their relationships were aesthetically unsatisfying.

I think that Huxley must already have realised, when he was writing *Time Must Have a Stop*, the kind of literary-moral dilemma in which he had become involved, for there are clear indications in this novel—the repetition of situations and even characters from *Crome Yellow* and other early books, the return to youth in Sebastian and to Peacockian hedonism in Uncle Eustace—

that he is attempting to escape by way of the past. The attempt only showed how much better *Crome Yellow* and *Antic Hay* had been, while Huxley's indication of a path to the Kingdom of God was ineffectual, partly because of the unsympathetic nature of Bruno, the character through whom it was expressed, and partly through the general tiredness of the whole novel. It seemed clear that he had come to the end of his career as a novelist, that his interest in the creation of personalities had now been almost wholly submerged in his concern with religious and moral issues.

His latest work, *Ape and Essence*, is to my mind no disproof of this contention since, although it is one of the most important recent works of fiction, it is hardly a novel at all, and can more reasonably be considered as a combination of the futuristic romance and the allegory of our own time. For Huxley clearly has at least two intentions in this book: besides wishing to show the physical effects of a world that has been ravaged by a more total war than any in the past, he also desires to warn us of the moral flaws within ourselves which are ultimately responsible for the tragedy.

Technically, *Ape and Essence* is by no means faultless. It has, indeed, the appearance of being written with a deliberate awkwardness, as if the author wished to add to the effectiveness of his shock tactics by disregarding smoothness of technique, and the formal plan of the film script introduced by an excursion of the narrator into a cactus desert to find its already dead author is almost ridiculous in its elementary simplicity, yet arresting in its bare starkness.

For all its technical clumsiness, *Ape and Essence* remains Huxley's most impressive piece of writing for many years. It is topical, in that it reflects our dread of the immediate future, but there is also a deeper probing into the evils that cause this dread. It burns with a positive anger such as English satirical writing has only rarely attained in recent times, yet it avoids the usual fault of satire, for behind all its contempt and horror there lurks a real love and respect for humanity, a kind of tenderness which we have never met before in Huxley's novels and which seems to show a positive emergence of compassion out of a desert of negation. It is only through finding the surviving germs of love in another being that the hero finally escapes.

In one aspect, *Ape and Essence* is a warning of the external wrath to come. In another, it is a revelation of the evil within ourselves, from which that wrath must spring. For the terrible thing about the people of the dying race is not so much the evil that has been done to them, as the fact that they themselves have come to accept evil as a way of life; and the blame Huxley places unequivocally on man today. It is he who has accepted the collective rather than the personal, the national rather than the universal, who has raised the state into a god, who has allowed fear to drive him to the doom he does not desire.

Huxley has tried in the past to show us the Kingdom of God, and has failed. He has succeeded in showing us the Kingdom of the Devil. And it can well be contended that, in an age like ours, it is better to have written an effective moral warning, to have contributed to making men aware of their true position, than to have written a good novel. Huxley's development seems, indeed, to be reproducing in a general way that of Tolstoy, with whom he had many social and ethical views in common. Turgenev, it will be remembered, wrote from his death-bed to urge Tolstoy to resume the writing of great novels. Yet it may well be argued that Tolstoy's later rôle as a moral teacher was a greater contribution to the good of humanity than another *War and Peace*. Similarly, while granting that Huxley has almost voluntarily stepped out of the ranks of novelists of literary significance, it would be foolish to attempt any minimisation of the importance of the message he conveys with so much force in *Ape and Essence*, a message all the more important since it shows a satirist who has recovered his faith that man is not yet beyond hope, that he may yet save himself from the destruction without, and the rot within.

A SHORT STORY

FULL CIRCLE

DENTON WELCH

I REMEMBER it well, that still night before the war, when I walked up to the entrance of the majestic house. The last glimmer from the dead sun was still hanging in the air. It lighted up the curious, twisted chimney-shafts and baroque gables, dramatising them, so that it was difficult to tell whether the house was Elizabethan or Victorian.

I pulled the long shaft of the hand-bell and heard it echoing down what I imagined to be a stone passage. Soon there were footsteps, and the door was opened to me by a footman with striped waistcoat.

For a moment I was surprised and rather taken aback by this uniform, never having seen it in real life before. I had imagined in a cloudy way that, if people still had footmen, they dressed them like hotel waiters. Now this nineteenth-century relic delighted me. I looked at his smooth, good-looking, commonplace face and said, 'Can you tell me where I can get a bed for the night near here? I'm walking along the Downs to Winchester and have lost my way.'

He gave my rucksack a darting, rather furtive look, as if to read my intentions from it; then said in a soft voice, 'There's nowhere, unless you choose to go back to Steyning.'

'How far is that?' I asked.

'About three or four miles.'

I saw that I would get nothing more from him. He was waiting, not too politely, to shut the door. He wanted to get back to the wireless in the servants' hall or to his book by the fire. I felt, for some reason, that the family was away and that the servants had the house to themselves.

It was on the tip of my tongue to ask if he could put me up somewhere in the house, but I had not the courage to listen to the weak excuse he would probably make for refusing. So I let him shut the door gently in my face.

Now I was surrounded by the night again, with nowhere to sleep 'unless I chose to go back to Steyning.' His wording seemed ironical. As if anyone would 'choose' to walk back three or four miles after having walked twenty!

I crossed the cobbled court and stood by one of the stone urns which punctuated the balustrade. The coarse park grass on the other side lapped right up to this low wall. I heard the noise of animals chewing in the dark, and to the right I thought I caught the glimmer from some crack between the curtains of a window. I wondered if the dark mass could be a cottage. I decided to climb over the balustrade and walk across the park to see. As I passed, sheep coughed, rose jerkily to their feet and ran away to lean against the trees in fright. Sometimes I would see them with their rumps in the air, their front legs still bent under them in an involuntary attitude of prayer. They seemed unable to move; then suddenly their legs would flick straight.

As I drew nearer, I saw that the light was moving. A man was carrying a lantern out to his beasts. I felt glad that I would not have to knock again at a strange door.

'May I shelter in one of your outhouses?' I asked, hoping that my voice would not startle him.

He turned round abruptly, then came

towards me with the lantern held high.

'Where do you come from?' he asked, shining the lantern on my face.

'I am on a walking tour. I have been up to the big house, but the footman said that I'd have to go back to Steyning if I wanted a bed.'

'They wouldn't help you there!' he said contemptuously. It was contempt as much for my ignorance as for the inhabitants of the house.

He stood silently for a moment, looking at me. I thought he was going to ask me into the cottage, but when he spoke, it was to say, 'Come along with me, I'll show you where there's some hay.'

He took me across the tiny farm-yard and led me to a shed which joined the barn. The smell of the hay met me as I stood in the doorway. The man had gone in and was stirring it up in one of the corners.

'You ought to be all right there,' he said.

I eased my rucksack off my shoulders as I thanked him. Leaning against the wall, I realised how tired I was. I hoped that he would leave me so that I could sink into the hay.

I did not have to wait, for, after one further swift glance at my face, he said goodnight. I watched the lantern swinging across the farm-yard, and waited until it had disappeared into the cottage and the door had clicked behind him. Then I undid my belt, kicked off my shoes and, after wrapping myself in my raincoat, lay down to sleep.

I WAS so tired that the events of the day kept passing before my closed eyes, running and mixing together in that fantastic, restless way. Cows in their stalls nearby shook their chains or knocked against the wooden walls.

Just as I began to wonder if I should ever fall asleep, I felt delicious sinking and fading of consciousness. I lay like this until something jerked my eyes open. I was not yet fully awake but I knew that the dim light had changed in the shed. It was darker still. Someone was standing in the doorway.

'Who's that?' I cried out in alarm before I realised that it must only be someone from the cottage.

'It's all right, mate,' the man said in a soft voice. He came towards me and sat on the edge of the pile of hay. I saw then that he was only a youth, two or three years younger than myself. I thought that he was probably the son of the farmer. He had a pleasant face but his lips and eyes were sullen. He seemed almost on the point of tears.

'What's wrong?' I found myself saying against my will. I did not want him to think me curious.

There was no answer for a moment and I thought that he had resented my question, until he suddenly burst out: 'Would you let your father still beat you if you were eighteen?'

'Not if I could help it,' I said with a laugh, trying to make the atmosphere lighter.

'No more would I, and I haven't!' His voice reached almost to a shout on the last words. 'Just look at that,' he went on, turning his back to me for my inspection. In the dimness I could just see dark stains on the white shirt. They might have been oil, mud or blood.

I said nothing, and in his impatience he pulled his shirt over his head. Then I knew what they were. On the white flesh were raw wounds and long bruises.

'He made my brother help him tie my hands to a tree, then he did that with his belt,' he said. 'But he won't do it again in a hurry; I've treated him the same way!'

'What have you done?' I asked fearfully.

'Kicked him in the belly till he was sick on the floor!' The youth laughed, and leaned back till the hay pricked his wounds and he flinched.

If the man with the lantern were his father, I wondered why I had heard nothing. He had certainly not been 'kicked in the belly till he was sick on the floor' when he led me to the shed, and if the incident had happened after he left me, I surely would have heard some of the inevitable noise through my half sleep.

However, I determined to ask no more

questions. I accepted the fact that a father had beaten a son who was too old to be beaten, and that the son had replied by kicking the father in the stomach.

My companion showed no desire to go back into the house; he said that he would stay with me, out in the shed, till the morning. He lay on his stomach, trying to ease his back into the most comfortable position. I had ointment for blisters and scratches in my pack. I got it out and rubbed some gently on the less important wounds (I could do nothing about the others). His flesh seemed burning, and I could feel how his whole frame trembled if I hurt him.

When I had finished, he groped in the dark, then found my hand and held it firmly, as if to thank me.

Almost immediately after this, he fell asleep, still touching me. Moving as little as possible, I put away the ointment and lay down beside him. His smooth breathing and the warmth from his body lulled me. Soon I, too, must have fallen asleep, for I remember waking later at the climax of some violent dream in which my companion, or someone like him, only rather older, was standing in a doorway watching a woman take a tray of cakes from the oven. She seemed quite unaware of his presence till he sprang at her, pushing her on to the kitchen-range and snatching the cakes with his other hand. I awoke at the terrible scream she gave as her hands and face touched the hot-plates of the stove.

I opened my eyes. My companion still lay close to me in the hay with his hand on mine; but his breathing seemed to have grown thicker and I thought that I smelt an unpleasant odour from his body—an unkept, unwashed smell which had not been there before. I supposed that the warmth had drawn it out from his old clothes. I tried not to think of it and composed myself for sleep again, hoping that I would not dream.

But I did. Scene after scene of squalor and brutality passed before me. The youth was always the chief actor. In each scene he seemed to be heavier and coarser than in the last. I was always the helpless spectator, hidden in some cupboard or spying through some skylight from the roof.

In my last dream I saw him following a little girl across a common. She was pretty, she danced gaily as she went along, throwing stones into the air and skipping. I saw him steal up behind her and grasp her round the waist. She screamed, but he put his hand over her mouth and dragged her underneath the bushes. I saw him pin her hands down and kneel on her legs, spread-eagling her. Then he tore at her clothes, and I awoke with such horror that I found myself sweating, while my throat was sore with dryness. For a moment I lay there collecting myself, inexpressibly thankful that it had only been a dream. I thought I would tell my companion when he woke of the horrors I had dreamt about him. It would amuse him. I could still feel his body near me and his hand on mine. He was very still, so I did not disturb him.

Although I kept my eyes shut, I knew that it was day, because of the red glow of the light shining through the flesh of my eyelids.

As I became more conscious of my surroundings, I noticed the unpleasant smell again, but there was no doubting it now. It was the smell of human dirt, despair and squalor. His hand on mine seemed strangely rough and horny, and there was a coldness pervading his whole body. I thought that he must have been chilled in only his thin shirt and trousers.

I sat up, opened my eyes and looked down on my companion. Then in a moment I had jumped to my feet and lay back against the wall, my legs and arms trembling from shock.

A strange man lay there, and his face was grey and seamed and filthy. A line of dried dirt ran round his open, grey-lipped mouth, and a dribble of saliva was caught in the stubble on his chin. The strong hair on his chest frothed out of the rents in his sweat-blackened shirt. He was utterly still. I could not understand how my convulsive jump had not wakened him.

Then I knew.

A new realism, based on experienced reality, has recently come to us from Hollywood and it is fascinating as well as noteworthy

FILM NOTEBOOK

PAUL ROTHA

CONNOISSEURS of entertaining films have been finding some surprisingly good American pictures tucked away in odd corners. With the current quota requiring forty-five per cent of feature screenspace to be filled by British features, American distributors have more products lined up in London than they can find West End bookings for. Super-dupers, like *Joan of Arc*, must be presented at the hub of the world, but first-rate crime thrillers, which the Americans make really well, can be slipped in at the theatre round the corner, or sent straight out on general release without a West End showing.

* * *

Hunting out these shy pictures (with someone like Richard Winnington or the 'Sequence' boys to guide you) is rewarding. At a time when English-speaking cinema as a whole is at a low level, it is exhilarating to find that Louis de Rochemont's three documentary-style films—*The House on 92nd Street*, *No.* 13 *Rue Madeleine* and *Boomerang*—made with all his dynamic journalistic flair, have started a cycle of realistically-shot and brilliantly-directed crime thrillers reminiscent of the first gangster film period in the early 'thirties, and just as good.

Most of the new films basically come down to a battle between law and crime; most have their roots in the files of the F.B.I., but because they are made to a large extent on the real locations, and because they are peopled with excellent character actors of the naturalistic type, they are fast-moving, fascinating, if melodramatic, entertainment.

Two Hollywood studios seem to specialise in the style. 20th Century-Fox have given us, after the de Rochemont films named above, *Call Northside* 777 and *The Kiss of Death* by Henry Hathaway, *The Street With No Name* by William Keighley, and *The Cry of the City* by Robert Siodmak. Keighley's film is the best, with its vividly-pictured boxing gymnasium, its flyblown hotels, its endlessly-filled sidewalks and its so true to life small-part players. Based on an authentic F.B.I. case, it faithfully presents the seamy side of a typical big American city, with a shooting climax in a factory at night as exciting as anything from the cinema for years. These films are on the whole better made than *Naked City* (Universal-International), which preceded them, because their scripts are closer knit and their character-playing more subtle. For me, Hellinger's film of New York appealed only because of its documentary approach; its story was trite.

* * *

A new gallery of cops and robbers—Richard Widmark, Mark Stevens, Richard Conte, Victor Mature, Berry Kroeger, John McIntyre—have replaced our old friends Cagney, Eddie Robinson, Raft *et al* of the early 'thirties, and they are equally efficient. The interior sequences (also often taken on

the spot and not studio fabricated) of these films catch wonderfully genuine atmospheres, an example being the Italian family scenes in Siodmak's *Cry of the City*. Not a little credit for this must go to the cameramen for their remarkably clever location lighting. Names like Joe Macdonald, Lloyd Ahern, George Diskant and William Steiner are worth noting.

From RKO-Radio, while Dore Schary was in charge of production (he is now at M-G-M), have come two little-heralded pictures which deserve far wider showing than they have so far been given. They are genuine experimental films, something so rare these days that the spotlight should be turned full on them. Made on small budgets and obviously intended as second features, Ted Tetzlaff's *The Window* and Nicholas Ray's *They Live by Night*, are Hollywood post-war cinema at its best. Like the crime and cops films of *The Kiss of Death* type, they also use mainly real locations, but they are more important than the F.B.I. stories in that they are much deeper in their attempt at human observation and social understanding.

* * *

The Window is the story of a small boy who oversees a murder in a New York tenement, but neither his parents nor the police believe him until, in a quite terrifying climax, he proves the truth. Simple, unpretentious, completely sincere, the film is so well directed and so well played (with the possible exception of the boy's parents) that to me it is so far the best film of the year from any source (as the Academies have it these days). At third viewing, I liked it even better. Tetzlaff is a new name to me as a director (he photographed several feature films), but Frederic Ullmann, Jr., his producer, was brought up in the newsreel tradition and until recently produced the *This is America* monthly series in competition with *March of Time*. He died early this year. The playing of the boy by Bobbie Driscoll (a find of Walt Disney's, who is to play in *Treasure Island* in England for him) is so utterly different from the boy heroes of *The Fallen Idol* and *Oliver Twist* that comparisons are difficult. I believed in this boy. But it is the direction which distinguishes this film, with its sensitive attention to detail, its use of close-ups, its beautiful timing and its handling of the movie-camera as an instrument of interpretation and not a recording machine.

* * *

More ambitious in social criticism is Nicholas Ray's *They Live by Night*, although it is less successful as a film than *The Window*. The producer this time is John Houseman, who ('Sequence' tells us) was a co-founder with Orson Welles of the Mercury Theatre. The story is mainly that of a young boy escaped from gaol with two hardened convicts and his curious attachment for a semi-literate daughter of a drunken garage-owner. Involved in a brazen daylight robbery (brilliantly directed), the boy gives the slip to his pals and goes off with the girl, marries her at an uncanny wayside wedding office and evades capture until he is shot down like a hunted animal, under the girl's eyes, by the police at a country camping-site. Again mostly filmed in real surroundings, the film has a stark authenticity that is compelling. Its portrayal of the loneliness of adolescence in the swift-moving modern American scene, in the rural hinterland, is most deeply moving. Its direction is beautifully observed and technically has some quite new methods of approach. (How the overhead automobile shots were taken for the dramatic opening of the film I do not know, unless by helicopter.) Its faults are over-length and a diffuseness in the latter half of the film.

Act of Violence (from M-G-M), by Fred Zimmeman, is another sincere film that crept into London at a small cinema. Very skillfully acted by Van Heflin, Robert Ryan and the always wonderful Mary Astor, it suffers, like Ray's film, from over-length, but it has some sequences—such as the escape through the Los Angeles streets at night and the scene in the slum snackbar—which are memorable.

Such films as these prove that there are still directors in Hollywood who can make

films that really are films, if they are given the chance. It is their sureness of touch, their tight control over their material, their sheer skill at how to direct, cut and shape a film that make so many, alas ! of our own pictures look like the work of amateurs. It is cruel to compare these realistic, taut, dynamic and above all tremendously entertaining, films with most of our own pictures, yet we must remember that they are not directed by acknowledged top-line directors like Capra, Ford or Wyler.

* * *

None of them highly-budgeted, and all based on the realist approach, these Hollywood pictures make it more difficult than ever to understand why the documentary method has not been adopted by the British feature companies. Until almost the end of the war, it was the British who led in the realist approach and yet since then the lead has been swiftly taken over by the Italians and the Americans. The impact of documentary on British studios is negligible; in Hollywood it has been immense.

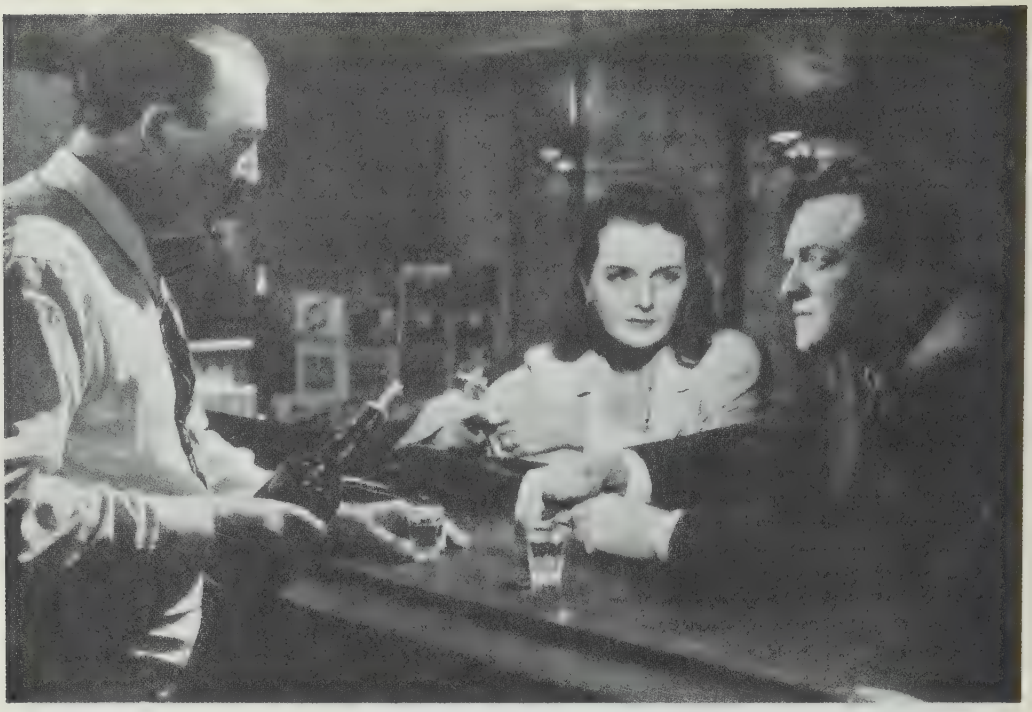
If there was any distinctive type of film developed by British film-makers before the war, it was the adventure-thriller picture. Hitchcock made his world reputation with such films as *The Thirty-Nine Steps, The Lady Vanishes, Blackmail* and *Murder.* These films, moreover, are of international coinage; they are about the only type of British picture which used to have a success with the American public. Not for one moment do I suggest that all British production should be turned over to this end, but that it is a line of film-making, coupled with our wealth of experience of real-life shooting gained from documentary methods, that could bear fruit in entertaining and successful pictures. *The Window, Act of Violence* and the *Street With No Name* are good adult entertainment because they are fundamentally cinematic. They do not linger on dialogue. They are not transcriptions from the theatre. Their stories move. Their directors, writers, producers and cameramen believe in the cinema as their medium. It is a language they have learned to understand and to use with fluidity and complete confidence. The realism of their films is fascinating and wholly entertaining because it is a realism based on experienced reality.

To judge from an interview in the new luxury Roman Catholic film magazine, *International Film Review*, Orson Welles is a strong anti-realist in cinema. He would despise these above-described pictures of American life, just as he would presumably dislike John Huston's quite admirably realistic *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (so reminiscent of Stroheim's *Greed*). Says Jean de Bongnie of Welles: 'He brings the strictest censure to bear on the school of thought that has been called Italian Neo-Realism and especially on Rossellini and Visconti.' That the maker of *Open City* and *Paisa* will be worried by this censure is improbable, but Welles will be infuriated by the realism of Rossellini's *Germany Year Zero*, belatedly just shown publicly in England, and more than a little puzzled by the more recent *The Miracle* (the second part of *L'Amore*), with its harshly realistic approach to a mystical subject. Rossellini and his collaborators at least have an original contemporary approach to the cinema, and if evidence is still wanted of this Roman's remarkable powers of direction and understanding of his medium, let doubters see the last two reels of the Berlin film.

* * *

In a hasty reply to a piece of mine in *World Review* last October, Sir Alexander Korda took the opportunity also to deplore the realistic approach to cinema, calling it *avant-garde*, and accusing me of believing it to be the only approach to cinema. It is not the only approach (fantasy is another), but it is an approach that comes nearer to using the medium at its most expressive and most entertaining, more so perhaps than stuffed fancy-dress of the past which cannot deceive the eye of the camera for all the money lavished on it. Forgive me, Sir Alex, but I would rather have one *The Window* or *Street With No Name* than a dozen *Prince Charlies*, and I fancy most filmgoers would back me.

American post-war crime has inspired Hollywood to make some crackling, realistic films based on the F.B.I. files. With action as their mainspring, shot largely on actual locations in the documentary way and photographed with newsreel vividness, these films have developed a new dynamic, realistic style. Above is the climax of the terrific ending sequence of The Street with No Name, *producer Sam G. Engel, director William Keighley, with* MARK STEVENS, LLOYD NOLAN *and* RICHARD WIDMARK (20th Century-Fox)



(Above) ACT OF VIOLENCE (M-G-M) *directed by Fred Zimmeman; a story of an ex-soldier pursued into civilian life by a misdeed committed in the war.* MARY ASTOR *and* VAN HEFLIN

(Below) BOOMERANG (20th Century-Fox), *produced by Louis de Rochemont (of* March of Time *fame), director Elia Kazan; one of the first of the new crime series with a social purpose.* DANA ANDREWS

(Above) THE WINDOW (RKO-Radio), *a psychological study of a New York boy who oversees a murder, brilliantly directed by Ted Tetzlaff.* PAUL STEWART *and* BOBBY DRISCOLL

(Below) CRY OF THE CITY (20th Century-Fox), *directed by Robert Siodmak.* BERRY KROEGER *as the crook lawyer and* RICHARD CONTE *as the gangster easy with the knife*

(Above) NAKED CITY (Universal-International), *the late Mark Hellinger's film of New York, shot on real locations by Jules Dassin.* TED DE CORSIA, *the wrestler-murderer, makes his bid for escape*

(Below) THEY LIVE BY NIGHT (RKO-Radio), *Nicholas Ray's first film, a sensitively directed study of adolescent crime, beautifully acted by* FARLEY GRANGER, CATHY O'DONNELL *and* HOWARD DE SYLVA

The World of Books

THE GOOD EARTH

REGINALD SORENSEN, M.P.

In former years 'Left' sociologists were apt to scorn the Malthusian thesis as a morbidly pseudo-scientific diversion from ethical and political necessities and an evasion of the paramount fact of human exploitation. If that criticism was justified, then William Vogt in his *Road to Survival*[1] can be dismissed as a Malthusian fellow-traveller.

But many Christians were also open to the same scorn, in so far as they blandly endorsed the simple conviction that 'the Lord will provide', even though they employed on suitable occasions the argument that inevitable natural law vindicated lucrative gain by the fortunate few.

Predictions of calamity arising from expanding populations appear to have been nullified by the opening up of new territories for human settlement and by increased economic production. Thus, although the population of England and Wales has increased from about eighteen million to about forty-four million today, yet the standard of life is now far superior, notwithstanding the loss and destruction imposed by the last war. It is therefore argued that, even though the peoples of India and Pakistan add over five million to their numbers annually, yet it is possible by improved agriculture and industrial expansion to lift those peoples from dire poverty within a decade or so. Further still is the claim that the whole human race could banish the shadow of malnutrition and poverty—by a more equitable distribution of its resources and better application of its scientific knowledge.

This involves, however, much more than has been generally recognised, as William Vogt endeavours to prove. The principle of democratic rationing is no doubt sound, but its operation has many difficulties, particularly in any extension beyond our own community, for the average British citizen is hardly likely to consent to a drastic cut of his daily bread and other foodstuffs in order substantially to raise the calorific level of 1,000 million Far Easterners. Even Christian leaders would urge the policy of levelling up rather than down, although this gives no prospect of immediate relief to half-empty Indian and Chinese bellies.

Against all such optimism comes the chilly blast of Lord Boyd Orr's solemn warning that year by year the over-all world food position is worsening and that an International Food Board is imperative. The *Road to Survival* gravely emphasises the predicament in a cascade of facts, illustrations and arguments. Indeed, the author scoffs at the widespread ignorance of the actual situation and what he dismisses as evasive pretences. He writes of soil erosion, deforestation, earth impoverishment and wholesale waste arising from man's blind treatment of the source of his food supply. The indictment is highly-pitched and virtually intolerant of assumptions contrary to his own, which at least may command attention to facts generally ignored.

Published by Victor Gollancz. 15s.

Writing as an American, William Vogt asserts: 'The future of our country is within our control. But a few more decades of such abuse as we have subjected it to will wrest the control out of our hands. We shall be slipping toward the oblivion of Ur, of Timgad, of Angkor Wat, of the North Chinese, the ancient Mayans, and at a speed too great to check. The greatest danger may lie in lack of time to apply the brakes.' Meanwhile, he claims, 'the present living standard for 145 million people is being maintained only by living on our resource capital. Within about a hundred and fifty years we have lost one-third of our topsoil, more than half of our high-grade timber, an unknown proportion of reserve waters, and a large but unmeasured part of our wild-life.' And again, 'as our wealth goes down the rivers with the run-off, it must inevitably carry with it a fall in purchasing power, and a consequent industrial dislocation.' These words may seem extravagant, but so did tales of the dust-bowl until they were beyond refutation.

Vogt calls for national and international control of the earth's resources. This he considers is indispensable if the yield is to become sufficient. Even this, however, is not enough. 'All possible conservation measures are futile unless human breeding is checked.' Hence, 'If the United States had spent two million dollars developing (such) a contraceptive, instead of the atom bomb, it would have contributed far more to our national security . . . '

This challenging statement is in keeping with his explicit assertion that without 'the control of populations and the restoration of resources', then 'we may as well give up all hope of continuing civilised life.' We do not know whether Moscow would count this as a heresy not to be tolerated, or what would have been the reactions of Marx; and it is a pity we cannot listen to a celestial Brains Trust that included Malthus, Marx and Adam Smith among its members. It would have been a fertile discussion on a problem as old as life itself, as we are reminded by the parable of the seeds, some of which fell on good, but others on stony ground. Mr. Vogt rolls this problem over and sends it spinning into the arena of our economic and political disputations, with disturbing but salutary effect.

OUR PLUNDERED PLANET

By Fairfield Osborn. *Faber & Faber.* 10s. 6d.

Reviewed by John Stewart Collis

A formidable body of knowledge has gradually been accumulating on the subject of Ecology. The word may actually sound unfamiliar to some people. We have all heard of Political Economy, and for a long time people have believed that, if only we could get our political economy right and our international affairs right, all would be well. It was believed that the main problems confronting mankind were the fair distribution of goods and services, and of keeping peace between the nations. It is now seen that, even if there were peace between the nations and the problem of distribution put into perfect order—all will be in vain if the ecological situation is disastrous.

The science of Ecology is the science of how to adapt ourselves to the balance of Nature. Nature has an Order of her own. If we superimpose an Order of ours on to the body of the landscape, then the natural order which gives us the means to produce food will be upset and the food will fail. Food can only be produced if the soil is there to produce it. If by any chance the soil should go, *we would go with it.* Up to now people have thought that there is plenty of soil in the world. There is—but not top-soil: and it is top-soil by which we live. We have just a few inches of the earth's layer for our use, upon which we most precariously stand. It can be washed or blown away or simply exhausted, quite easily.

This is now happening. We have already destroyed nearly half the top of the soil in the world. Unless we cease to do this and attempt to restore some of the eroded places, there will be mass starvation in a few years—that is the message of *Our Plundered Planet.*

THE MEANING OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

By Leslie Paul. *Faber & Faber*. 16s.

Reviewed by Kenneth Walker

To make a diagnosis of an illness, and then to prescribe a remedy for it without having proved to himself the efficacy of the remedy and without explaining to his patient how it should be applied, would be considered a derogation of duty on the part of any doctor. Mr. Leslie Paul has not been guilty of this. In *The Annihilation of Man* he studied the causes of totalitarianism and then urged that the only remedy for this all-too-prevalent disease was an application of the life of the spirit and a restoration of Christian values. In his new book he has sought to prove the reality of these values and has shown how they can best be used to cure the world's ills. His title is taken from Berdyaev's words, 'God is the meaning of human existence', and as his main thesis is the necessity for belief in God, no better title could have been chosen. His book is divided into three parts: the meaning of nature, the nature of subjectivity and the meaning of revelation. The first part deals with the physical world around us, the second with the nature of man, and the third with the doctrines of the Christian church. In his opinion the root cause of confusion in the present world is the failure of man to realise his true nature, a failure which has had disastrous results for him. He came to this conviction while engaged in the work of lecturing to the troops during the recent war on a variety of subjects. The humanistic view of man had clearly failed and he felt that such great thinkers as Goethe, Rousseau, Hegel and Herbert Spencer were now on trial. At first he was only inclined to lend a 'not too compromising' approval to the alternative views of man associated with theism, but as he followed his arguments to their logical ends, he found himself gradually being forced, almost against his will, to accept Christian doctrines. 'God is the meaning of human existence and love is the meaning of God.' This was the only conclusion at which it was possible for him to arrive and he accepted the inevitable.

It is the first two parts of his book that will make the wider appeal and that will satisfy those who, whilst acknowledging the pressing need for a spiritual revival, do not necessarily identify this with a renaissance of the Christian church. The author undoubtedly has a great capacity for dealing clearly and succinctly with scientific ideas and he handles modern developments in science with considerable skill. As his main theme is the meaning of human existence, the subject of modern psychology is of great importance to him. The school of psychology associated with the name of Freud has obviously had a very strong influence on contemporary youth, and for this reason he gives it a prominent position in his survey of modern thought. Although he does not necessarily subscribe to Collingwood's view of Freudism that it is 'a fashionable scientific fraud' and of the same nature as the astrology and alchemy of the Middle Ages, he rightly denies that the Freudian system is a science, or likely to be the precursor of a science. All that the psychoanalysts can really claim is that they have constructed a certain system of psychology from data obtained from a method of treatment which often gives excellent results. As the author points out, these data may admit of more than one interpretation, and experiences in childhood may be followed by different consequences. For example, a humiliating experience may engender in an individual who has suffered it either a feeling of inferiority, or else it may fill him with an insensate ambition. The hope, therefore, of establishing a science of the mind 'as capable of defining the general laws of human behaviour as mechanics is of defining the laws of engines is stillborn.' Mr. Leslie Paul's new book is a worthy sequel to its very successful forerunner, *The Annihilation of Man*, for few writers have a wider range of knowledge and still fewer are able to express their ideas more interestingly and more clearly.

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TRIAL AND ERROR:

The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann

Hamish Hamilton. 21s.

Reviewed by Max Beloff

On 16 February 1949, Chaim Weizmann was elected first President of Israel. So in Jerusalem was reached the climax of a career that had begun in 1874 in the little town of Motol, in what Dr. Weizmann calls 'one of the darkest and most forlorn corners of the Pale of Settlement'—how dark and how forlorn for its Jewish inhabitants is made clear enough in the earliest and perhaps the most illuminating chapters of this fine autobiography. For it was from the Jewish Pale of the Tsarist Empire—from a people and a culture that came to an end with the German massacres of World War II—that Zionism drew both the inspiration and the leadership that made its astonishing impact on the world possible. It is perhaps the greatest merit of this modest and self-effacing narrative that Dr. Weizmann manages to convey the essential nature and background of the Zionist movement in the period of its growth. Were it not for this, it would be more surprising than it is to find such wealth of material for reflection in the life-story of one who admits to no interests other than chemistry and Zionism, and who demands from the reader some readiness to concentrate on both, and to appreciate how the two themes of the author's life have come together in the conviction that it is part of the destiny of the Jewish homeland to give play to the scientific genius that Jews have (and so often unrewarded, as above all in Germany) displayed in the service of other lands.

No reviewer could pretend to do justice to this work by attempting to summarise it, the more so in that Dr. Weizmann's particular felicity as an author lies in his portraits of individuals—not merely of his colleagues in the movement, but of non-Jews who have crossed his path—Balfour and Lloyd George; Allenby, Lawrence and Wingate. For the reader in this country, the crux will lie in Weizmann's handling of the relations

between Great Britain and the Jewish National Home, relations which began with such hope, and have ended, at least for the moment, in an atmosphere disastrous for both.

For although Dr. Weizmann says little of the present—the bulk of the book was written before the end of 1947—he must be well aware that the position envisaged in the Balfour Declaration, that of Jewish National Home in close and permanent association with Britain, was far healthier than can be the position of an isolated Israel proclaiming an untenable 'neutrality' in a Middle East that lacks every element of stability.

In dealing with later years, Dr. Weizmann is, of course, in a different position; he is a partisan telling one side of a story—and handicapped in telling it, as he was in action, by the weakening of his own position in the movement by the rise of new and extreme factions that accused him of being a 'British agent'. It is perhaps in the latter chapters that Dr. Weizmann reveals that he is not entirely free of the most obvious weakness among leaders of the Zionist movement, as among the leaders of all nationalist movements, the inability to see themselves or their cause from outside as well as inside, as a part of general history. The Arabs are not just a 'problem'; they are a people, as the Jews claim to be a people and not a problem. Great Britain is not just an obstacle to Zionist aspirations; it is the centre of a world commonwealth with other claims upon it, and other duties.

Nevertheless, the British record—even before the Moyne murder and subsequent terrorism, whose fatal significance Dr. Weizmann does not minimise—has passages that one would prefer to forget. But if they must be remembered, it may well strike the reader as significant that, on the whole, those statesmen who sympathised with the Jewish plight and with Jewish aspirations were by every test superior to those in whom Weizmann found only blank incomprehension. It is not only Palestine which suffered when Balfour and Lloyd George, and Amery gave way to the Sidney Webbs, the Neville Chamberlains and the Ernest Bevins.

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One cannot help reflecting that the events of the last few years might have been different had Winston Churchill remained in power in Great Britain.

But the might-have-beens of history are aids only to the historian. Dr. Weizmann still looks to the future; and in the last pages of the book there are observations of vital importance for following the future development of Israel—a development that cannot but lead it far from the atmosphere and influences, good and bad, of the Jewish pale. The two great dangers that Dr. Weizmann sees for the infant State are the state of mind brought about by terrorism, especially by superficially successful terrorism, and on the other hand, the danger of theocracy. The new State must be secular and tolerant. Of even more immediate significance is his statement that 'the world will judge the Jewish State by what it will do with the Arabs.' The well-wishers of Israel can only hope that the spirit of its first President will prevail.

BRITISH DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

By Henry Drummond-Wolff. *Hutchinson.* 7s. 6d.

Reviewed by Richard Scott

Under the somewhat imposing title of *British Declaration of Independence: Practical proposals for mediation between East and West and the solving of present economic problems*, Mr. Henry Drummond-Wolff tries to show that the Most-Favoured-Nation Clause is, almost alone, responsible for the world's present discontents. Most economists outside the United States would agree today that this clause, which provides that each trade concession between two countries shall automatically be enjoyed by all other countries with which they have treaties embodying this clause, tends to restrict rather than promote international trade. But Mr. Wolff goes a great deal further than this. He seems to see in the wide operation of this clause (imposed on the world by the Expansionist policy of the U.S.) the cause of all our political, as well as our economic, troubles. The panacea he offers is full of political and economic reciprocity.

Mr. Wolff's arguments—or more accurately assertions, for he develops his thesis in but fifty pages, and he has little space for argument—are difficult to follow. At times he is quite baffling. In a chapter, for example, on the Charter of the United Nations, which he wants completely redrafted, he asserts that 'the structure of the U.N. is determined by the M-F-N principle and Expansionist policy'; 'The prevention of effective reciprocity in trade frustrates self-determination and constitutes aggression'; 'The fact of aggression, irrespective of the veto, will inevitably provoke war. A simpler and more direct approach to peace might be made therefore by the reservation of war-making powers, by the elimination of voting procedure and by the exercise of treaty obligations!'

Mr. Wolff would like to see the middle and smaller nations—'the non-autarkic nations'—associating politically and economically 'on the model of the British Empire'. They would set up Regional Councils which would become permanent members of the Security Council. These groups would be composed of the three categories of nations into which he divides the world —non-autarkic, Totalitarian and Expansionist. The result of this happy association, he anticipates, would be that 'internal and external conflict would progressively be eliminated and any necessity for the right of veto would be removed.'

It may be doubted if many readers will feel that here lies the secret to improved relations between East and West, or that the eighteen points in which the author summarises his conclusions—'without a grain of artifice or rhetoric', as Lord Altrincham says in a Foreword—justify the title 'British Declaration of Independence'. To be just to Mr. Drummond-Wolff, it is possible that there is more coherence and intelligent thinking in this short treatise than his literary style permits to emerge.

THE SECRET FORMULAS AND TECHNIQUES OF THE MASTERS

By Jacques Maroger. *Studio Publications.* 25s.

Reviewed by C. E. M. Joad

This, I make no doubt, is a work whose scholarship is no less remarkable than its erudition. But it is emphatically not for what the Victorians used to call 'the general reader'.

Ostensibly devoted to an account of the techniques adopted by the great masters of painting, it is for the most part devoid of any interest save the technical. It is divided into three sections, of which the second and third are devoted to a description of how a number of the great masters, ranging from Van Eyck to Rembrandt, and from Giorgione to Velasquez, prepared their materials, what formulæ they used for the composition of lead, of tempera and of wax mediums, what recipes for the application of the formulæ, what colours they favoured, and how they used them. The interest of all this is strictly professional.

The general reader, however, will feel himself entitled to comment upon the writer's contention that not only is a thorough knowledge of technique necessary, but that it is a *sine qua non* of the production of great art. This comes out clearly in his remarks on the loss of technique. M. Maroger holds that 'painting as such reached its apogee with Rubens', who died in 1640.

'The last of the masters of the seventeenth century had carried with them into their graves the simple secret of the combination of mastic varnish with the black oil. When it was used by itself, the oil with lead was a detestable vehicle for painting; its quality was at once debased. This decadence comes right down to our own times bringing changes even into the objectives of painting —such, for example, as putting an end to the representation of the third dimension by so many of the modern artists.'

The implication is that, as M. Maroger himself puts it, 'the decadence which followed was inevitable and a certain drama lies in the fact that this decadence which followed was inevitable, and a certain drama lies in the fact that this decadence was due simply to the loss of a secret technique, that is to say, to a cause that was entirely material.' None of the great Dutch masters founded a school. Hence, when they might have transmitted the secrets of their technique to a line of painters who would have continued the great tradition, they left nothing behind them but their pictures, with the result that, 'by the beginning of the eighteenth century, we find no further trace of the astonishing technique that had been the basis of so many masterpieces.' For my part, I find it hard to believe that the causes of great painting or, more precisely, the causes of its decline, are to be identified so completely with material factors as the above suggests. The painters of the Impressionist school, more particularly Manet and Cézanne, who are entitled to look the greatest of the old masters in the face, were presumably wholly without the advantages of 'the secret technique' of the Dutch masters. Indeed, the medium in which they worked was wholly different. One's doubt about M. Maroger's qualifications as an art critic are not removed by his remarks on Realism. He seems to hold that the faithfulness with which material things are represented on a canvas is the main criterion of a picture's worth. Thus, speaking of Velasquez's picture, 'Las Meninas', he tells us that 'this canvas represents, surely, one of the very highest achievements of Realism' and goes on to remark that 'with this painting Valesquez unquestionably reached the height of his technical development.'

While fully recognising the importance of

Realism in art, it is impossible for the critic with the development of the last hundred and twenty years in mind, to resist the view that it is only *one* of the *genres* in which a picture can achieve greatness.

M. Maroger was formerly a technical director of the Laboratory of the Louvre and President of the Society of the Restorers of France. These are high qualifications and their holder is, no doubt, in his own sphere a very eminent man. But it is hard to rid oneself of the suspicion that his preoccupation with technique, which is, after all, only a means to the production of an effect, has biased his judgment in regard to the value of those effects which depend only in a relatively small degree upon technique.

THE CRISIS OF THE HUMAN PERSON

By J. B. Coates. *Longmans, Green & Co.* 12s. 6d.

Reviewed by E. F. F. Hill

This is a wise, vigorous, naïve book, with many passages of sharp penetration. Its theme is immediate and important, and is precisely stated in the title. The essential nature of man is threatened, not with enslavement, but with dissolution. Man is becoming *viscous*.

There are some who sniff at the mention of 'crisis', not only at the word, because of its emotional charge and because it has been so frequently used of late, but also at the fact. The fact of crisis would cease to be if there was a world-wide absolutism, if man disappeared, if questioning gave place to the mute obedience of functioning, and response to a nicely calculated and determined reaction. There are some who know this and take appropriate action to secure world-wide absolutism.

A generic, general, absolute crisis is, in principle, impossible. Crisis is decision and judgment. And decision and judgment belong, not to the universal, not even to the universal concrete, but to the personal-concrete, to the historical—to the man who decides and judges. And to decide is not merely to make up one's mind about a course of action; it is to cut one's way through a rigid and encircling determinism, to be superior to it.

There is much thought upon many problems and much knowledge upon many subjects, and specialised fields of research are more numerous than market gardens, and very much is said *about* these things. But the man who thinks and knows and inquires has lost the art of declaring who he is. It is doubtful, of course, what economic value such a declaration would have; neither can we be sure of its technological value in any sphere. And yet it is precisely in this declaration, in that it can be made at all, that the fact of crisis lies.

There is no crisis without the giving of testimony, and there is no testimony which is not a guarantee to others of the fidelity of one's self in one's spoken word. Crisis, testimony, guarantee, fidelity, speech: these belong together, so that in the absence of one, the others are meaningless.

It is the giving of testimony in the presence of others—Berdyaev, Buber, Mumford, Mannheim—thirteen in all, which forms the living substance of this book. And this is so contrived that, as Coates declares himself to these, they in turn step forward with their own testimony and guarantee, so that we have not so much a debate as a conversation, a conversation which has its moments of sharp encounter and disagreement.

I would sum up this book in one short phrase: the fidelity of witness. But to what? To the dignity of man. To the fact that, in the midst of the times when the presence of man is threatened, not by the impersonal forces of nature, but by dehumanised powers of his own making, man, the 'common' man, is a being who may surmount himself and the world and achieve victory over the iron determinism of the world: that *he* may guarantee, not only the present in which he is, but the future towards which he takes himself. It is the crisis of the human person, because it is he who is the activating subject, the centre of truth where every objective structure has its ground, without whom there would be no State, no Church, no Nation, no Race—not even a Dictator to rule for democratic ends.

NEW SHELLEY LETTERS

Edited by W. S. Scott. *The Bodley Head.* 10s. 6d.

Reviewed by Henry Treece

Whatever side one takes in the Shelley controversy, one is bound to be wrong; and judgment can never become easier until we may know definitely whether Shelley was, as he said in a letter to Peacock (not collected here), 'a rare prodigy of crime and pollution', Ariel, impersonal spirit of air, or, as Matthew Arnold thought, 'a beautiful but ineffectual angel'.

Now Mr. Scott's book is too slight to answer the question, though it throws some light on many of the major problems of Shelley's life. These letters, hitherto unpublished for the most part, save in a limited edition, cover Shelley's expulsion from Oxford for refusing to say whether he had written the tract, *The Necessity of Atheism*; his infatuation for the 'suffering' schoolgirl, Harriet Westbrook; his unaccountable desertion of her and his liaison with Mary Godwin; and finally his drowning in the Bay of Spezzia, so laconically and hence so movingly told by Mary in a letter to Hogg, the focal-point of this book.

Inevitably, in a collection of ninety-five letters and notes, many questions remain unanswered: Did Hogg seduce Harriet while Shelley was in Sussex? Was Mary really in love with Hogg or merely jealous of Claire Clairemont? And was Sir Timothy Shelley quite as heartless as Mary makes him out to be?

These questions, in a book which makes epistolatory eavesdropping almost commendable, and which mercifully is about people and not poetry, become almost irrelevant when one considers the treats that are offered: Shelley's speculations on suicide ('I slept with a loaded pistol and some poison last night, but did not die . . .'), on the possibility of God; his comment that he is just about to take the Sacrament, despite his atheism and his impractical character, as revealed by the comment that he was overjoyed about selling his house for £1,000 in spite of the fact that he had spent £800 on repairs and was trading-in the furniture too! There is the letter from an Oxford don to a friend on the Shelley expulsion, a masterpiece of myopic self-congratulation; there are the friendly wisecracks—the Shelleys being called the *Conchoids*; Peacock telling Hogg that with his Attic salt he would be the Bacon of his time; or Leigh Hunt asking about the Athenian Peacock, 'How is Peaky with his Greeky?'

Above all, there are the very human hopes and enjoyments and fears, the great and little tragedies, which make these Olympian figures so much like ourselves.

W. S. Scott's book is likely to become a rich source for students of Shelley; but why, in a work which contains such excellent portraits of Mary Shelley and Hogg, and reproductions of their letters, should valuable space be sacrificed on an engraving of the bookshop where Shelley's undergraduate tract was 'offered for sale for twenty mintes on or about 5 February 1811'? I would rather have seen what sort of hand Thomas Love Peacock wrote!

DYLAN THOMAS

By Henry Treece. *Lindsay Drummond*, 7s. 6d.

Reviewed by Alex Comfort

This is by far the best book of criticism which Treece has produced. He is a writer who is quite incapable of being an effective critic of work which he dislikes—as a profound admirer of Thomas, however, he manages to be critical as well as sympathetic. There is a balance in his assessment which is an achievement for a warm-hearted, if not hot-headed, writer. As an incidental to his success in discussing Thomas, Treece also gives a far clearer statement than ever before of his own attitude to poetry, and this is worth having in itself, since his ideas have had considerable influence, and have been misunderstood as much by his imitators as his critics. In fact, although Treece as a critic and Treece as a writer invariably evoke intense emotions, ranging from *Schwärmerei* to anger, this is a book which will inspire neither. He gives

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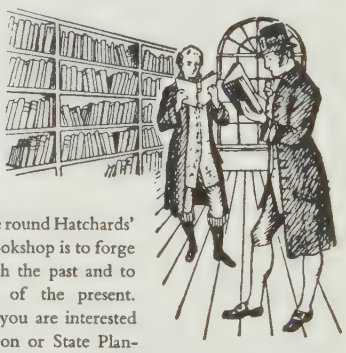
full weight to the critics who dislike Thomas, and for the first time meets them with really convincing argument.

The book covers the background, achievement, prosody, form and imagery of Thomas, and the intellectual climate in which he exists. It would make a very good introduction for an overseas reader who wanted to come to terms with Thomas's poetry, or with modern poetry in general. In one or two places it is obscure, and Treece's idea of subjective poetic experience does not lend itself to any clear insight in terms of psychology, but the analysis of mental processes in poetry has been grossly overdone, and I prefer the method which inflicts least damage on the poems themselves. He also, I think, avoids giving an inflated picture of Thomas's place in literature. He treats him as he is—an original writer with faults and a particularly vivid diction. Altogether this must have been a difficult book for its author, and he has done it extraordinarily well.

152 YEARS OF GOOD BOOKS



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Selections

Jean Bailhache: The Secret of the English. *Quality Press.* 6s.

Selected Writings of William Morris: Edited by William Gaunt. *Falcon Press.* 5s.

Benjamin Disraeli: Selections from the Novels: Edited by Eric Forbes-Boyd. *Falcon Press.* 5s.

Robert Smith Surtees: Scenes and Characters: Edited by Cyril Ray. *Falcon Press.* 5s.

Reviewed by David Wright

I can forgive anthologies when they are compilations of complete poems, but a book of prose selections always appears essentially sinful. The sin is committed by the author, if he is only readable in fragments; or by the editor, if he dismembers works or art for the edification of Burbank with a Baedeker; or the reader, if, imitating Burbank, he is absorbing small cultural gobbets for the good of his soul. It is, therefore, with a sense of sin that I approach these three books of excerpts from Victorian writers, plus M. Jean Bailhache's account of a Frenchman's vision of the English.

Where, in M. Bailhache's book, can one recognise the descendants of Morris, Disraeli, and Surtees, or even ourselves as we are? There are pictures of the English landlady, the English old lady, the English attitude to food, sex, and total strangers; English institutions, countryside, etc., etc., with the necessary Gallic observations, which anyone could distil from a month's reading of the Sunday papers. For M. Bailhache seems to have missed one of the peculiarities of the English—an insatiable gusto for being discussed, even unfavourably. This is our oldest national characteristic, and is probably inherited from our ancestors the Anglo-Saxons, if we can believe their poetical assertions that of all things that give joy, fame is the most satisfactory. Certainly if one required information on the more evident habits of life in these islands, such as the macabre silence observed in railway compartments and the masochism practised with cabbages and potatoes, M. Bailhache would give it; but a better conception (though, alas, how changed!) of England might be derived from the three Victorian writers in the Falcon Prose Classics series.

Disraeli, Morris, and Surtees today possess one other common characteristic apart from the century in which they lived: that is, they are supposed to be dull. Surtees is the property of the diminishing huntin' and shootin' classes who justly thought him vulgar when his books first came out. Morris ought to belong to the aesthetes, but they are chary of recognising him.

The popular lukewarmness felt about the work of these authors is probably due to the fact that none of them was a writer pure and simple. Morris was as much a craftsman, Disraeli a politician, as a writer. In the case of Surtees, it must be that huntin' and writing don't mix—it's all right if you are writin' about hunting, but the reverse if you are writing about huntin'—for though Trollope followed hounds assiduously, he wisely held to cathedral cities in his books; and the reputation of Masefield has suffered rather than otherwise from *Reynard the Fox*.

The prose of Morris runs like clear shallow water, and is at its excellent best in *News from Nowhere*, and the political pamphlets which eschew the dreadful Wardour Street English that ruins most of his translations. Disraeli is very good in his conversational pieces, and here and there one is faintly and surprisingly reminded of Miss Ivy Compton-Burnett. Surtees, like Scott, grows wings when his characters talk dialect. The Victorians are coming into their own again; and the Falcon Press selections may forerun the general resurrection of the works of these writers.

Novels

THE CLEVER AND THE BLIND

Jean-Paul Sartre: The Diary of Antoine Roquentin. *John Lehmann.* 9s. 6d.

Simone de Beauvoir: She Came to Stay. *Secker & Warburg* and *Lindsay Drummond.* 12s. 6d.

Elio Vittorini: Conversation in Sicily. *Lindsay Drummond* and *Wilfred David.* 8s. 6d.

Mary McCarthy: Oasis. *Horizon.* 2s. 6d.

Jean Giono: Joy of Man's Desiring. *Routledge & Kegan Paul.* 12s. 6d.

Reviewed by G. S. Fraser

Roquentin, the hero of Sartre's earliest novel, is the type of the man shut in on himself. The clever, wretched, solitary creature has settled down in a dull, provincial city to study the career of an obscure political adventurer. Utterly unattached, he is able to regard everything—people in restaurants, paintings in the town museum, paragraphs in the newspaper, stray thoughts in his own head—with the same queasy curiosity. There has only been one important human relationship in his life—an affair with an actress, who always got angry with him because he did not understand an innocent and childish game of hers, the game of 'perfect moments'. Life is beginning to seem to him more and more of a humbug: the enthusiasm for the human race of a silly, friendly little acquaintance of his, whose head is full of clotted nonsense, and who is reading, in alphabetical order, through all the books in the public library: the wisdom of the local doctor, whose 'experience' has taught him nothing but a lot of platitudes: the dignity of the notables depicted in the museum, who were in fact a set of panicky reactionaries (one of them published a volume of speeches on the Dreyfus case, called *The Duty to Punish*). Sex is generally the last refuge of the misanthrope, but Roquentin is upset by witnessing an attempted indecency in a park and by reading a newspaper account of rape and murder. In the midst of his general boredom and dejection, he begins to be seized by occasional fits of sheer physical nausea. These, to him, prove that the world is fundamentally nauseous. They are a kind of intuition of the deeper reality. Man is a thinking animal, his dignity is thought, and through thought one should get close to reality. But what if reality, finally, is something at which one can only retch?

Roquentin is amazingly clever, poor chap, but at the same time he is blindly obtuse. He does not grasp that his nausea, his horror at his own existence, is simply the result of his horror at the existence of others; that we can only accept ourselves at the cost of accepting others. He considers other people intelligently and carefully, as if they were things; he hardly ever responds to them as persons. The most touching moments in the book are, in fact, those in which out of passive good-nature—he is not a malevolent man—he allows himself to hover on the verge of some sort of response. It is when he is being betrayed into sympathy or action—letting his silly, friendly little acquaintance stand him a lunch or later defending him in a brawl in the public library—that his nausea hits him most sharply. It is the means, in fact, by which his proud and morbid loneliness defends itself. Roquentin's philosophy is no more convincing (if one is in health and spirits oneself) than any other sick man's, but he is a type, nevertheless, of a kind of sickness that lies in wait for all of us in a drifting, disintegrating society.

Françoise, the heroine of Simone de Beauvoir's novel, might seem a completely opposite type, yet she combines a similar

cleverness with a similar obtuseness. She is the managing sort: a woman who must always do the right thing, must plan her days, must conduct her emotional life on a strictly rational basis. She thinks, and this is her tragedy, that she is completely transparent to herself, and that others, if they are honest, must share the glow of mild complacency with which she tends to regard herself. Her life is upset when she and her friend Pierre, busy and successful Parisian intellectuals, adopt a dangerous and beautiful little provincial, a 'child of nature', called Xavière Pages. The name suggests a Spanish origin, and Xavière has a sultry Spanish temperament; she cannot adapt herself to the strict routines of these worthy middle-class Bohemians; she is content to *be*, while they must be perpetually justifying themselves by *doing*. Françoise becomes more and more exasperated with Xavière and so, of course, more and more sweetly reasonable. She yields Pierre to Xavière and later, seeking consolation, has a short affair with a young man called Gerbert, in whom Xavière is also interested. The war comes along and Françoise and Xavière, the men gone, will have to share a flat for the duration. Françoise finds that Xavière gives her no credit at all for her attempts at rational goodwill but regards her as a jealous, underhand schemer. And has not Xavière's distorted view of things a hateful plausibility? Françoise cannot bear that there should be anybody in the world who takes this view of her, so she leaves the gas on one night and snuffs little Xavière out. Thus, and thus only, can she regain her self-esteem. The story is engrossing. How far, though, does Mademoiselle de Beauvoir *see through* Françoise? She appears almost to identify herself with her heroine, and yet Françoise is a far more dangerous and frightening person than poor little neurotic Xavière. She is dangerous because her intelligence never shows her the limitations and weaknesses of her own character, the absurdity of treating herself as a universal model and of trying to turn a spoiled, impulsive, but poetically sensitive girl into the same sort of self-justifying prig as herself; because, above all, of her blind need to think well of herself at any cost. Mademoiselle de Beauvoir *shows* all this, but how far does she herself *see* it? I am inclined to think that she may share some of Françoise's illusions about herself, for I have noticed that woman friends to whom I have lent this book find Françoise a very sympathetic character.

Conversation in Sicily is, like *Oasis* in its more rarefied way, a good antidote to both these books. *Conversation in Sicily* is pastoral in the proper sense (the sense examined by Mr. Empson); it illuminates complicated social relations by examining simpler ones, as a kind of working model. The plot could not be simpler. A young Sicilian, who has been working in Italy for many years, and who is worried about the state of the world, goes back to the island to visit his old mother; he talks to people on the boat and the train, to his mother, to her fellow villagers. He recalls childhood memories. Life is harsh and difficult for the Sicilians, also absurd, also noble, also gay. Nothing much happens. All the talk is repetitive, inconclusive, but somehow he begins to feel himself planted back in life again; he has gone on the opposite road to Roquentin, accepting others, their nobility, their blunders, their imperfections, and so in the end coming to accept himself and a realistic notion of human dignity. The book has a rare charm. So has *Oasis*, the *Horizon* prize novel, a narrative strung on as slight a thread. Another war is looming, and a number of American progressives, whom the military machine does not want, retire to a summer hotel to try to found, as a tiny but practical gesture, a small community from which aggression and competition will be shut out. Some, the purists, are hopeful about this, others, the realists, less so. The community gets a shaking when rude trespassers, stealing strawberries, are scared off by a rifle shot, but it may, one gathers, survive this, though with its first hopes and ambitions—frail and disputed as these were—ironically dinted. In spite of this plot, and of Miss McCarthy's satirical wit, the story is not hostile to human hopes. She is that very rare sort of person, an intellectual who is

genuinely interested (and not sentimentally so) in the more amiable qualities of the human animal. She is aware of what is futile, petty, and inconsistent in her characters, but all the same they are the most likable set of people I have found between the covers of a book for a long time; Katy, the wayward female philosopher, is particularly enchanting.

Giono's novel is pastoral in the other sense, the sense I find harder to take: the simple, not as a working model of the complicated, but for its own sake. Nature is richly and oppressively present everywhere and the human characters move and act, on nature's model, with a plodding slowness. The writing is very fine, or at least very painstaking, but I miss humour, I miss subtlety, I do not respond to the *mystique* of the soil. This is a gap in me, not a fault in M. Giono: for those who like this sort of thing, this is just the thing they like, and, no doubt, for many readers, the most important book on my list.

WOODROW WYATT, M.P. (*continued from page 29*)

in Singapore a tri-shaw is the more expensive. Chinese use them for fear of being thought rich by business associates, despite their slowness, and because tri-shaw coolies rarely argue about the fare, whilst cab-drivers always do. Tri-shaws are the three-wheeled pedal vehicles that have now displaced the old man-drawn rickshaw. They are more humane and more efficient. One type of 'taxi' whose humanity I doubt is that employed in Chinese-owned dance halls.

In Bangkok there is one splendid, wide modern street with smart-looking shops (they call Bangkok the Paris of the East and its night life does its best to justify the title). As we drove down it, I noticed an enormous monument in the middle of the road. 'What is that?' I asked the driver. 'That is our statue to Democracy,' he proudly replied. 'We are the only country in the world to have one.' Three days before, the Army and the Navy had been fighting a pitched battle in the streets. Governments change only by *coup d'état*. Well, I suppose Siam *needs* a statue to democracy. And the rest of South-East Asia? That needs a little peace and quiet and a chance to settle down.

W. A. CHUKOVSKY (*continued from page 51*)

came to almost immediately and said: 'I dreamt that I was climbing quite high with you up these book-shelves . . . and I became dizzy.' A little later, without opening his eyes, he took Dahl's hand and said: 'Now please let us go, but together!' Dahl lifted him under the armpits and suddenly, as if he had just awakened, Pushkin opened his eyes, his face brightened and he said: 'Life is over!' Dahl did not understand him and replied: 'Yes, we have turned you over.' 'Life is over,' he repeated clearly and firmly. 'It is difficult to breathe—it oppresses me!' Those were his last words. The quietness which enveloped him seemed to give him ease of mind, but in fact he no longer lived. We were all silent. After two minutes I said: 'What is happening?' 'It is over,' answered Dahl.

So quietly, so softly his soul had disappeared. For a long time we stood silent, not daring to disturb the mystery of death. When alone, I sat down next to him and looked into his face. His head was a little to one side and his hands were lying stretched out calmly as if they had dropped down after some heavy task. What was painted on his face was inexpressible. It was so new to me and yet so familiar. It was something akin to an inner face, like a full, deeply satisfying knowledge. I wanted to ask him: 'What do you see now, my friend?' And what would he have answered if he had then re-awakened to life? At that moment I saw the divinely mysterious face of Death itself. How wonderfully had Death expressed in him its own mystery and that of Pushkin! Never before in his face had I seen a more elated, more solemn thought. Of course, he had already before given expression to it, since it was a part of his own elevated nature, but in such purity he only revealed himself when everything earthly had fallen from him.

Such was the end of our Pushkin.

Some Books Received

ALMEDINGEN, E. M. THE INMOST HEART. *The Bodley Head*, 9s. 6d.

This is the story, against a mediaeval background, of Walafrid, who 'grew, had disreputable companions, loved trees and water, and also wine and dice, cherished a half-heathen girl and a bear-cub, had a feeling for the spoken and the sung word, was not above telling a lie, always longed to travel and to sail remote seas, and was determined to shape his life according to his own fashion.'

ASHLEY, Sir William. THE ECONOMIC ORGANISATION OF ENGLAND. *Longmans, Green & Co.*, 8s. 6d.

A brief sketch of the whole course of English economic development, based on lectures given by the author at the Colonial Institute at Hamburg. He shows how the last thirty-five years have seen almost unmatched changes in economic organisation.

BROWN, W. J. THE LAND OF LOOK-BEHIND. *Latimer House*, 9s. 6d.

Mr. Brown, in this entertaining account of a journey and a sojourn in Jamaica, ranges over a wide field of subjects—he discusses the significance and menace of Communism; the collapse in moral values characteristic of our age, the decisive character of religious faith in the contemporary situation, and mingles this with clever descriptions of 'people, places and things'.

PEI, Maria A. THE WORLD'S CHIEF LANGUAGES. *George Allen & Unwin*, 21s.

An account of the world's main languages, their geographical distribution, the linguistic families and the elementary relationships among their members, the description of the sounds and grammatical structure, etc., together with a selective vocabulary of seven of the most widely-spoken languages.

PHILIPS, C. H. INDIA. *Hutchinson's University Library*, 7s. 6d.

At this turning point for India, the public wishes to understand her political and economic situation. The present position and the main lines of India's development against its historical background are explained in this volume.

SAMUEL, R. H., and THOMAS, R. Hinton. EDUCATION AND SOCIETY IN MODERN GERMANY. *Routledge & Kegal Paul*, 12s. 6d.

The authors of this book provide a critical analysis of education in modern Germany in the light of the trends in social, political and intellectual life, from the early nineteenth century to the end of the Nazi régime, with a final chapter on the present-day position.

BARBARA WARD (*continued from page 10*)

economies freedom from the alternations of the trade cycle—which high and sustained capital investment alone can check—and it would restore a balance between the production of industrialised countries and the output of the primary producers.

These functions of a possible central authority are given in the merest outline. The fewer its functions, the more likely its establishment, for—in spite of all talk of world government—the plunge from national sovereignty to international authority is the highest and the coldest the human race has had to make—or rather the coldest which its politicians have had to make. The proposals made here for a central government are purposely reduced to the very minimum. For the rest, the best method of association is to free nations as far as possible from the restrictions of national economic barriers, and by freer investment, freer movements of people, and freer trade, to encourage them in the process which Mr. Churchill once described as 'getting mixed up together.'

Yet, however simple the proposals for a union of the free world, let us admit at once that, written down in cold blood, they ring with as Utopian a note as the latest draft for a world federal constitution. Can a move be made which demands such an upheaval in men's normal political habits? Is it not darkening counsel to propose that such mountains should be moved and such crooked ways made straight? Why not adopt the more honest course and admit that the Western world will do very well if it does not completely fall apart after 1952—that friendly but aloof national relationships are the best for which one can reasonably plan?

To this—the approach of the eminently sensible citizen—two things must be said. The first is that this is neither a reasonable nor a sensible age. It is an age of whirlwinds, of political cataclysms; an apocalyptic age in which towns

(*continued on page 80*)

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disappear at the touch of a switch and clouds of lethal gas rise in clouds of fantastic beauty 30,000 feet above the suddenly dead; an age in which six million human beings have been asphyxiated in special camps because of their race, and millions more live and die in forced labour for their political beliefs.

It is a terrifying, insane, and infinitely dangerous age in which survival cannot be purchased cheaply or national existence guaranteed by lazy or indifferent or old-fashioned methods.

In fact, the first test of an effective policy in such a world should be: 'Does it take the breath away?' And incidentally, the only recent Western policy which qualifies under this test—the giving away in free gifts in one year of some five billion dollars by one nation to other nations—is also the only one that has had any real effect on the world balance of power.

The second point is that nothing could have looked more utterly outrageous and improbable than Lenin's statement in 1917: 'We will now proceed to build the Socialist State', when it is put against the background of that plan—Russia in ruins, millions of ignorant soldiers and peasants streaming to their homes, all the world against Bolshevism, the deepest human instincts—the instinct of property, of patriotism, of family life—to be overcome. Yet that state was built, none the less. Today, Communist leaders think, even if they do not say, 'We will now proceed to build the Communist world', and it can be declared with the utmost certainty that, unless they meet a faith and a vision greater than their own, they will in the end succeed. The world is made and remade perpetually by the force of ideas and by the beliefs in the minds of men. The Western world must either believe in its own principles and its own destiny or succumb to the greater faith.

Printed in Gt. Britain at The Curwen Press Ltd., Plaistow, London, for the Publisher and Proprietor, Edward Hulton, and distributed for him by Hulton Press Ltd., 43–44 Shoe Lane, London, E.C.4. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand, Gordon & Gotch (Australasia) Ltd.; for South Africa, Central News Agency Ltd. Registered for Canadian Magazine Post.

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